

CYPRESS CREEK QUARTERLY



Volume 8, Issue 2

News for the Cypress Creek Homeowners Association

September 2011

From the Editor

Kelli Hughes

Wow. What a summer we've had! Record temperatures, record drought, record fires. I don't know about you, but I think I've had enough of Central Texas summer weather for a while. I hope despite the heat you all still had a great summer. At least it makes us all enjoy fall just a bit more and we probably all got caught up on a few things inside since we couldn't leave our houses during daylight hours without melting. Now, we are all back to school, football, soccer, and other outdoor activities at some hour besides 5 am. Whew! Read on for upcoming events in our community.

If you have an article, announcement, or information you'd like included in the next newsletter, please send them to news@cypresscreekhoa.org

East Meets West at National Night Out Ice Cream Social

Melanie Williams

Mark your calendars!!! National Night Out will be held Tuesday, **October 4** at the end of Sandra Drive in the cul-de-sac from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Ice cream will be provided. If you live on the east side of Cypress Creek, come on over with the kids and meet your neighbors on the west side, who will all be out. Kids can bring their bikes and scooters and ride around while the adults mingle and get to know one another. Older kids can play basketball or just hang out with friends. Bring a folding chair and relax. Our last NNO was a huge success, and everyone had a lot of fun, including the kids! For more information, contact Melanie Williams at 336-8342 or msignoff@gmail.com.

Mandatory Watering Schedule

Make sure you are following the **mandatory** watering schedule for Cedar Park. Double check your sprinkler system settings. Hand watering is permitted any day, but it is best to water before 10 am or after 7 pm no matter how you are watering. The watering schedule is no longer optional.

Odd Addresses: Wednesday & Saturday

Even Addresses: Thursday & Sunday

Speed Limit Increase

Kelli Hughes

Recently, the City of Cedar Park did a traffic study and subsequently increased the speed limit on 17 roadways around the city.

That included the section of El Salido that runs through our neighborhood.

This is concerning because of all the children that cross El Salido to get to the middle school and high school. Mike Dion presented our concerns to the City Council and asked that the speed limit return to 30 mph.

A decision has not been made at the time of this writing.

CCHOA Contacts

- Alliance Management (Christine Gamache): 512-347-2888 christineg@allianceonline.net
- CCHOA Board of Directors: directors@cypresscreekhoa.org
- CCHOA web site: cypresscreekhoa.org
- Newsletter Editor: news@cypresscreekhoa.org

Wildfire Preparation

Dar Rice

Because of the recent wildfires in Central Texas, we should always be prepared. Here is a helpful link on how to fire-proof your home and how to be prepared:

<http://www.cedarparktx.us/cp/default.aspx>

Labor Day Fire Relief

Clark Hughes

Our hearts go out to area residents affected by the recent and ongoing wildfires in the area. Many of us know friends, family, and coworkers who have lost their homes through these terrible events. The widespread devastation means there are pressing demands for assistance in many forms, and opportunities to help our fellow Central Texans abound. The following is a short list of charities representing avenues for providing financial, material, and volunteer support. Please search your heart and consider how you are able to help.

Organizations:

American Red Cross of Central Texas

<http://www.centex.redcross.org/>

Austin Disaster Relief Network

<http://www.adrntx.org/>

Austin Community Foundation GivingCity

<http://www.givingcityaustin.com/>

Other Resources:

How to Help Fire Victims - Fox 7

<http://tinyurl.com/6f5pkem>

How you can help the fire victims - KVUE

<http://tinyurl.com/3uyflpk>

How You can Help Fire Victims - 365thingsaustin

<http://tinyurl.com/4yoejg5>

Fall Lawn Care and Gardening

Rich Caldwell, ECOSystems

Fall Plantings

Make sure that you know the light and watering requirements of all your plants before you do your fall planting. Don't mix too many plants that have very distinctly different watering or sunlight requirements. Mulch all areas once you are done with your plantings. Mulch will save a lot of time by keeping down the weeds and reducing the amount of water needed once the

plants are established. Remember that newly planted beds need extra watering to get established. Make sure you can properly water your new beds within the current water restrictions in your area before you commit a lot of time, money and energy to planting.

Trees

Now is the time to do your pruning. However, due to the extreme heat and drought conditions, make sure not to cut so much so that you cause any additional unneeded stress on the trees. Make sure you paint all cuts you make to prevent oak wilt spread. Also, in order to make the best use of the water you can use, be sure to mulch your trees. Mulch is one of the best ways to save water and to help the tree get the most water it can. As a general rule, you should water your trees based on the diameter of the tree, take the measurement about 2 feet up the trunk. For each inch you will need about 5 gallons of water. Water your trees about every 2 – 3 days depending on current conditions. Each tree is different so keep an eye out for signs of stress, i.e. smaller than normal leaves, wilting, dead limbs, leaf drop, etc.

Grass

In this current drought situation we need to ensure that our grass is getting the water it needs. Deep infrequent watering is the best way to water. If your grass is looking bluish-green, blades are curling or your footprints remain when you walk on it, you need to water. Try to water to a depth of 4-6" each time you water to get the most out of your water. If you have irrigation system, make sure it is working efficiently and set to the correct restrictions for your area. You should have your system checked out by a State Licensed Irrigator to ensure proper use of your system.

Mulch

Customers are often asking about the benefits of mulch, so we have put together this information for you. Mulching can be one of the best things you can do for not only your plants but also your soil. Here are some general benefits of mulch:

1. A properly installed layer of mulch helps prevent the germination of weeds by shading the soil and keeping it cool, thereby minimizing weed growth.
2. Mulch helps the soil retain moisture during dry weather, thereby reducing the amount of water needed for the existing plant material. This is done by reducing evaporation of moisture from the soils.
3. Mulching your beds and trees also provides essential nutrients to the soil of your plants by keeping the organic materials available which in turn promotes strong growth for healthier plants and trees during the decaying process.
4. Mulch helps minimize erosion of essential soils from the beds.

Fire Ants

Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension

The second week of September is Fire Ant Awareness Week. While there hasn't been a lot of fire ant activity lately due to weather, be aware that they will be back.

When it's hot and dry outside, people may have fire ant activity and get stung but not see mounds to treat. Under hot and dry conditions, fire ants dig deep into the soil to find cooler temperatures and to be closer to the water table. Fire ant mounds often return after rainfall or with regular irrigation.

When temperatures are at the sweltering range, it's a good idea to bait for fire ants since the mounds may not be seen. Fire ants will still be out to forage for food and will pick up bait as a food and take it back to the colony to share with others. It is best to bait in the early morning or evening when temperatures are cooler.

Make sure that bait is fresh- it should have a nutty smell- and that it does not get wet from rainfall or irrigation. Read the label for the proper application rate and use the correct application equipment. Also, consider sharing some bait with your neighbors so their fire ants don't move into your yard.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

ACC Requests

Please remember that you must submit a request to the Architectural Control Committee anytime you make a change to the exterior of your home. That includes paint, landscaping, storage sheds, playscapes, etc... If in doubt, submit a request. When submitting ACC requests, please make sure you fill out the form correctly.

Notes from Your Board

Clark Hughes

The 2011 Texas legislature passed several laws affecting home owners associations (HOAs) in the state. By and large, the new laws grant specific rights to property owners and define the limits of the HOA's power to impose restrictions. Specific changes include:

* **Solar Power Generation.** Property owners have new rights to install solar power devices on their property. Restrictions that may be imposed by an HOA are explicitly listed in the legislation.

Eco Corner

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Reduce: Be mindful when making purchases. Try to purchase food in minimal packaging to reduce the amount of waste you produce. Buying in bulk reduces the amount of waste.

Reuse: Use re-usable containers. Use a re-usable water bottle or coffee cup instead of disposable containers. Use plastic or stainless steel containers to store your lunch items in (for you and your children) instead of plastic baggies. Use "green" bags at the stores you shop at instead of plastic bags.

Recycle: Opt for products in recyclable containers rather than those in disposable containers. Try to recycle just as much or more than you throw away. A good gauge is to see if you can fill your blue can faster than your green can each week.

* **Flags and Flagpoles.** Property owners now have the right to install a flag pole and flag(s) subject to certain limitations that may be imposed by the HOA.

* **Rain Barrels.** Property owners have new rights related to the installation of rain harvesting systems (AKA, rain barrels). The legislation includes specific limits on an HOA's power to control the appearance and location of these devices.

* **Religious Displays.** The new laws grant property owners specific rights to place religious displays on the entry to the dwelling (i.e., front door) subject to certain restrictions.

In all of these areas, failure to draft, approve, and file HOA rules pertaining to these topics means the HOA forfeits the authority to impose and enforce reasonable restrictions. For example, if we fail to enact a "solar panel rule" property owners will have the absolute right to install solar panels anywhere on their property, e.g., on a big pole in their front yard. HOAs are empowered to enact specific restrictions, for example that solar panels must be confined to the roof of the structure and back yards below the height of privacy fences.

Your board is working to respond to the 2011 legislation and is pursuing a set of new rules to ensure we retain the ability to enforce reasonable restrictions as outlined in the new laws.

New laws will also compel numerous but relatively minor changes to the administration of HOAs, covering topics such as document retention, record production, voting methods, payment plans, and notice of meetings. Alliance will help us comply with these new laws.

At time of writing, the Board tentatively plans to hold a special meeting of the Board to consider adoption of new rules on Tuesday September 20, 7:00 p.m. at Live Oak church. Like all Board meetings, HOA members are welcome to attend. Please check the HOA web site for the date, time, and location, as these are not final as of press time.

Newsletter Notes

Clark Hughes

Going Green



We are still working to “go green” with the newsletter in the near future. The newsletters can be found on the neighborhood website at www.cypresscreekhoa.org. We are working

on going completely electronic so you can receive an “e-newsletter” to eliminate the cost of printing and cut your paper mail down as well. After you have read this printed newsletter, please recycle it.

E-Mail List

If you would like to be added to the neighborhood e-mail list for urgent information and e-newsletters, send your e-mail address to Christine Gamache at christineg@allianceonline.net

Advertising

We also want to remind everyone that, although we are not accepting paid advertisements, we are happy to provide free advertising to HOA members. If you are interested, email news@cypresscreekhoa.org and be prepared to provide a business card sized graphic in any standard graphics format. We’ll do what we can to accommodate you. Please take advantage of this opportunity!

Note we’re leaving advertisements out of this issue to keep from bumping to another page.