



Cypress Quarterly

January 2005
Volume 2, Issue 1

Next Board of Directors Meeting is
Thursday, January 6, 7 PM, at the
Unitarian Church, El Salido Parkway.

Printing services were donated by
Terri Georgulas, The UPS Store, 8127
Mesa Drive, #B206, Austin, 481-0520.

Inside this Issue:

- 1** CCHOA Holiday Goodwill
Quarterly Fees Reduced
Fence Update
- 2** El Salido Curbs & Gutters
Board of Directors
Capital Improvements
Lawsuit Update
Park Endorsement
Web Site Update
- 3** Audit Update
Neighborhood Watch
Bylaws and CCR Review
Greenbelt Cleanup Success
- 4** Sewer Rates
Yard of the Month
Youth Activities
- 6** An Expression of Thanks
Ads
- 7** Try to be a Better Neighbor...
Community Information
Saving Money
UT Open House
- 8** Home Foreclosures
Make Your Christmas Tree Fire
Resistant
Plants and Bugs

The next quarterly newsletter deadline is
March 19, 2005. We would like to
distribute the letter during the first week of
April. Please submit articles to Terry
Tobias, terrance_s@sbcglobal.net

CCHOA Holiday Goodwill

Blue Santa Collection

Marilyn and Mike Stanford are sponsoring a Blue Santa at their home, 1804 Clay Lane, for the City of Cedar Park and Williamson County through December 13. Blue Santa is an organization sponsored by Cedar Park Police Department in conjunction with Hill Country Christmas that collects toys, cash donations, and food for less fortunate families in the local area. If you would like to donate to this cause, please email the Stanford's at damlstanford2001@yahoo.com

Blood Drive Planned

A neighborhood blood drive is scheduled for Saturday December 11, from 11 AM to 2:00 PM. with the Scott and White Blood Mobile. Your donation would be greatly appreciated. Although blood is always needed, Christmas is an especially difficult time at the blood banks. Utilization climbs and donations fall. This is a charitable donation we can make which doesn't require writing a check. To facilitate those of us who have children activities will be offered to keep them busy while you are donating.

If you can donate please contact Geoff Meiteen at gmeiteen@austin.rr.com with a preferred time on a 10 minute increment. If you either need children watched or can help by watching children during this brief time, please let me know that also.

A blood donation can be made every 8 weeks. If this is something you are willing to do, I would further like to have the blood mobile here on a bimonthly basis. How about that for that for a great neighborhood commitment!

Quarterly Fees Reduced

After a thorough budget review including potential expenses for 2005, the Board of Directors passed a motion at the November 7 meeting to reduce quarterly fees from \$54.00 to \$48.00 beginning with the January 2005 billing period.

Fence Update

By Geoff Meiteen

Our community fence installation is complete. Perhaps most importantly is the general consensus that it looks great – a major improvement from our old fence. The project was delivered under budget, and took one week longer than anticipated. Our contractor, Concretex, deserves a big thank you. Above and beyond their contract, several items which would have been legitimate extra charges were not “change ordered”. These included some special treatments around some select trees, around a man hole, a demolition/haul off of about 500 linear feet of old fence for which they were not obliged.

In sitting on a LISD committee (school zoning), I've had the opportunity to talk with several

individuals from all over our area who pass through our neighborhood regularly. What is interesting is the maps we used: our neighborhood isn't large enough to house our designated number. We're practically invisible. More over, we've been "transparent" or identity less even to those who know the overall area well. I was met with blank faces when describing where we are. Until I described us as the neighborhood on El Salido with the new wood like fence. Then everybody knew exactly where we were. My point is that the fence is not only practical for in terms of function and maintenance, it's also a significant upgrade. It has helped define our neighborhood. The combination of these things inevitably contributes to property value. The most fundamental purpose of an HOA is to maintain property values. To this end, I think we have done well as a community.

Special thanks to the volunteers who put in a lot of time and hard work on the Fence Committee: Seana Wheeler, Dan McLaughlin, Bobbie Fuller, David Howell, Dan Beamon, Ed Theiss, Vicki Parrish, and Curt Aydelotte.

It's been a long and time consuming process. I would have never imagined a fence could be such an emotional issue, and our committee members represented the gambit. Our meetings were frequently "robust", and through this they remained focused and upheld their commitments.

El Salido Curbs and Gutters Update

On October 27, 2004, Mr. C. W. Schneider, Senior Engineer, City of Cedar Park, reported on the progress of the planned upgrade to El Salido Parkway with curbs and gutters. Although the cost of the planned improvements have been reduced from approximately \$900,000 to

\$400,000, considerable planning must be accomplished along with obtaining City Council approval and project funding. It appears that another bond issue may have to be passed before the project upgrade is realized.

Board of Directors

Board member position open

The current Board of Directors, their offices, and the year in which their term to the board expires are:

President Rodney Schwalbach 2006
rodney@hr360.org

Vice President Terri Brisse 2007
tbrisse@austin.rr.com

Secretary Bobbie Fuller 2005
mfuller1@austin.rr.com

Treasurer Mike Dion 2005
mdion@austin.rr.com

Member Marty Cormier 2006
bwmctx@isp2k.com

Member Marilyn Stanford 2005
damlstanford2001@yahoo.com

Member Terry Tobias 2005
terrance_s@sbcglobal.net

Capital Improvements Update

By Geoff Meiteen

The capital improvements committee is meeting and doing diligence on several suggestions that have been forwarded by the Association membership. These suggestions can be more or less divided into categories; entry beds, entry signage, the Wilson way divider, the El Salido mini-park, the common drainage ditch, landscaping El Salido, Landscaping Cypress Creek (behind Todd). The committee has broken

down into individual research "task" forces for thorough consideration as to how best to utilize the money we've been saving over the years for these improvements. The goal is to have suggestions prepared for the board to review in their meeting before the next general meeting in April 2005, and provide the general membership with options to vote on. We look for any improvement projects to begin perhaps toward May 2005 or later. These improvements will not involve any future special assessments. These projects will be funded with monies we as a community have been saving for just these purposes over the years.

Lawsuit Update

An amended lawsuit was filed October 26, 2004, on behalf of Mr. Baskett and Mr. Zelinski. A copy of the amended lawsuit is located on the Documents page of the CCHOA web site. If you do not have access to the internet, you may obtain a copy from the Williamson County Court House, County Clerk for a fee.

Park Endorsement

The Board of Directors sent a letter to the City of Cedar Park endorsing a park in what was lot 25 of Cypress Creek prior to the developer deeding the land to the City. Williamson County tax records indicate that this area is owned by the city. A few of our homeowners have observed that this area is designated as a park on some maps. The Board hopes the city will designate this area as a park. A copy of the letter may be read from the What's New web page.

Web Site

The web site is proving to be a success in keeping our community informed. The monthly cost to the Association for this service is

\$27.50. Here are the average monthly statistics from May – November 2004:

| | |
|------------|--------|
| Visits | 1,142 |
| Page views | 5,118 |
| Hits | 17,023 |
| Download | 363 mb |

In November an average of 51 visitors a day viewed our web sites:

www.cypresscreekhoa.org
www.cypresscreekhoa.com

Please let us know if you have any problems with or suggestions for the web site. Or, if you would like your email added to our alerts list, please submit terrance_s@sbcglobal.net. This list is not shared with anyone and is used only for community information.

Visit all the pages on the site including: **What's New** for the most recent community information; **Classified** to see your neighbors' businesses that include substantial discounts on other services, baby or pet sitting services, and local restaurants recommended by homeowners; **Community Links** for local events and government services.

Audit Update

At the October 7, 2004, meeting, the Board of Directors unanimously passed a motion to have a three year audit included as a line item in the 2005 Budget. The estimated cost for the audit is \$2,800. An accounting firm independent of Alliance Association Management will conduct the audit. No special assessment will be necessary for the audit.

Neighborhood Watch

For your information we are listing the emergency and non-emergency numbers for the Police department:

Emergency Police or Fire Telephone Number: 911

Non-emergency Police Telephone number: 258-2800

Coyote Warning

As many homeowners may be aware from local television news reports, coyotes are a problem in a number of northwest Austin neighborhoods. In late October, an Association homeowner on Eleanor Way reported that a coyote killed a pet cat. Please keep your pets indoors at night and do not leave them outdoors alone. If you spot a coyote or other perceived dangerous or unwelcome animal, please call the City of Cedar Park Animal Control: 258-3149, after business hours: 258-2800.

Solicitors

A number of solicitors are going through the Cypress Creek Neighborhood. The City of Cedar Park requires all solicitors to possess a city permit. Homeowners have the right to ask solicitors for their permit, to refuse to talk to solicitors for any reason, and to call the police non-emergency number if they feel it necessary: 258-2800.

If there is an emergency, please dial 911.

Credit Card Scam

Keep a watch out for people standing near you in the checkout line at retail stores, restaurants, grocery stores, etc. who have a camera cell/phone in their hand. They can take a picture of your credit card, which gives them your name, credit card number and date of expiration of said card.

CBS News reported this type of identification theft is one of the fastest growing scams today. Be aware of your surroundings no matter how innocent they may appear.

Bylaws and CCR Review

Terri Brisse is heading a committee to undertake this difficult and time consuming task. The committee would like representatives from every street in the Association. The committee needs representatives from the following streets: Eleanor Way, Todd Lane, Sharon Place, Sandra Cove and Jerry Lane. If you would like to participate on this committee, please contact Terri at: tbrisse@austin.rr.com.

Green Belt Clean Up a Success

by Dan McLaughlin

More than twenty people from our neighborhood joined with the Cedar Park High School Cross-Country Team to clear out brush and clean up trash from the greenbelt along the high school greenbelt. Most notable is the association property where



Clay meets El Salido. Please join me in thanking all of these neighbors for their hard work and sweat.

Special thanks to Mike Fuller for allowing us the use of his truck to remove brush and his chainsaw that Matt "Lumberjack" Brisse used so skillfully. With these two items this job would have been much more



difficult. Also, special thanks to Coach Sheard and the Cedar Park High School Cross-Country Team for giving up their time to help improve the trail and to the Leander

School District grounds crew for hauling away the debris piles. And, thank you to Terri Brisse for making the signs so we would know where to meet and dump the debris.

Great job folks!

Hope we can do this again in the spring.

Sewer Rates

Your sewer rates are based on the average water usage readings in December, January, and February. The average is calculated at this time of the year because there is less outdoor water usage.

Currently, the minimum charge for a 2,000 gallon winter average is \$21.70. Each additional 1,000 gallons is \$2.65. These charges are part of your monthly water bill.

The sewer rates for service addresses with no usage during the winter months are charged for 8,000 gallons at the current waste water rate until a

winter average for sewer can be established.

Yard of the Month

A panel of volunteers from our community and the Landscape Committee selected the October and November 2004 Yards of the Month. The Yard of the Month for October belonged to Donna and David Townsend. The Yard of the Month for November was awarded to Dan McLaughlin. Congratulations to these homeowners, and a special thank you to the judges for their time and effort. If you are interested in volunteering for the judging committee, please contact Marilyn Stanford, 336-9872, damlstanford2001@yahoo.com.

October 2004: Donna and David Townsend, 1706 Tracy Miller Lane



November 2004: Dan McLaughlin, 1804 Sandra Cove



December 2004: Evangelina and Frank Rhodes, 2410 Sharon Drive

Picture not available as of press time.

Youth Activities

Academics

People to People Program

by Linda Malouff

I am very proud to announce both our daughters, Amanda and Kayla, have been accepted for the People To People Student Ambassador Program. Amanda and Kayla are two of only 40 students selected to go from the Greater Austin School District Regions extending from Pflugerville to San Marcos. The girls worked very hard academically, and this is a great opportunity for them to represent the U.S. They will be going to Australia and New Zealand at the end of the school year. Fundraisers are scheduled in the future to help pay for the travel expenses.

The People to People International was founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower as an initiative during his presidency in 1956 to foster world friendship and understanding through one-to-one communication between citizens of different nations including Australia and New Zealand, Europe and the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, China, South Africa, Brazil and Costa Rica. Ambassadors are selected after a rigorous academic and interview process. The People to People Student Ambassador Programs is based in Spokane, Washington.

Sports

By Seana Wheeler

Cheerleader Chelsea Delahoussaye cheers for **the Leander/Cedar Park Rangers (Pop Warner)**. On November 25th the Rangers took First Place at the regional cheer competition in their division. They will be traveling to Orlando, Florida to compete for the National Title the

week of December 6th at Walt Disney World. Leander/ Cedar Park had a tremendous showing at regionals; every LCP team took first place in their division. The regional is a 5 state competition. Nationals include the entire country. Please wish all LCP teams the best of luck as they travel to Walt Disney World to represent Central Texas! The teams include the Rangers, Lions, Jaguars, Bengal's and Cubs.

Zachary Ford had a great season playing third base for the **Sam Bass Lugnuts**. Zach set a record of in the park homeruns! They finished first in their league with an undefeated record. Congratulations Zach!

Ryan Ford played on the **T-Ball Gold Team** for the LCP Fall Tournament. The championship game went well into the night and was called a tie at 10:30pm! Ryan's team accomplished a Co-Championship title. Nice job Ryan! The Fords are anxiously awaiting the premier of their third son, **Jacob**, to the baseball craziness.

Max Forster started off his 7th grade year by playing **football for CPMS**. He started for the A team and had a great run. Max's flag football team, the Buccaneers, tied for the best record in the league. Now Max is off to playing basketball for CPMS. Look out Bo Jackson!

Keith Forster plays receiver for **CPHS Timberwolves JV football team**. As we all know, they have had a fantastic year! The Varsity T-Wolves are off to Waco this weekend to face Lufkin in the regional finals. Go Wolves!

Jeff Forster, #3 for the CPHS Varsity basketball team, is off to a great start this year. The team has seen a lot of improvement over last year, and recently defeated Westlake. Jeff was highlighted in the 11/26

edition of the Hill Country News with a very prominent picture of him shooting over a Westlake player!

Zachary Santiago has had a busy fall so far. First he played full back and corner for the **CPMS 7th grade football team**. He scored a touch down against Artie Henry and had a great overall season. Then it was off to Flag Football with **Tyler Mullens**, where their team, the **Red Skins, won the championship game**. Now he's off and running for the CPMS 7th grade basketball team, where he has already scored during the first game of the season. They say Zach is so fast that he is done before the others show up!

Watch for **Jenna Sayegh's** team, the 6th grade **Wolves**, this fall in the LCP basketball league. After finishing in first place in last year's 6th grade division (they were in 5th grade), they are sure to do well this year playing against their peers. Jenna is a devastating rebounder with a sweet touch around the basket. The **Wolves** placed 11th at the national tournament this summer in Florida.

Kayla Sayegh's cross country team won 6th in state. She is a sophomore at Cedar Park and runs on the girl's varsity team

Madeline Wheeler played for the **7th grade CPMS Lady Leopards Volleyball A Team**. They took second place in the district, losing only to Westridge the entire season. She now plays on the A Basketball team. They won their first district game 25-16, and took second place in the Cedar Park tournament; Madeline was high scorer with 39 points. When she's hot, best the defenders sit and observe.

John Wheeler's team, the 6-8 Neighborhood Sports **Flag football Cowboys**, won the championship game and ended with a 9-1 record.

John did a great job as a first time quarterback. John's basketball team, the Tigers, continue to be unstoppable with a 66-1 record. They played at halftime for Lanier/Dripping Springs basketball game at the SBC Center in San Antonio this weekend. John quickly filled the same net that Shaq, Michael, Tim and other pro's had filled previously with the sweet sound of swoosh. The entire team got to see what it was like to play where the pros play! Great fun was had by all!

Jeff Forster and Hector Santiago's new league, **Neighborhood Sports**, registration numbers exceeded expectations as many local kids participated and had fun. Spring registration for kickball and flag football will begin in January. Visit www.neighborhoodsports.us for more info.

Neighborhood Sports Leagues

Neighborhood Sports will have 3 on 3 basketball at Cedar Park Middle School on Sunday afternoon January – February.

Spring Kickball & flag football will be played in March – May. All games are local and fun for all. For more information or to register please go to www.neighborhoodsports.us.

Please email Seana Wheeler with all your kid's sports information for the next addition at skkmw1@netzero.com, or call, 918-0269.

Let's cheer on all our kids!

An Expression of Thanks to the Cypress Creek Community:

Dear Cypress Creek Neighbors,

We want to express our sincerest thanks for all the support that we received from this community during our daughter Morgan's fight with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. You supported us with donations of food, money, blood coupons, by giving blood and platelets to the Blood and Tissue Center here in Austin, and by joining the Bone Marrow Donation Registry. Even though we didn't know many of you at the time, the kind words and deeds and the multitude of prayers and well wishes sustained us during a very difficult time. Morgan's health is terrific now and January 10th marks two full years of remission. Though we have three more years to go before we can consider her cured, we are increasingly hopeful that she has conquered her cancer beast.



We will never be able to adequately express our gratitude for the kindnesses that we have received from our neighbors, but we hope you will feel our heartfelt "Thank You!"

Thank you.

Tony, Laurie, Morgan & Marlee
Randel

Ads: Rates for advertising in the Cypress Quarterly are posted on the web classified section. Homeowners receive a 50% discount. Please pass your ads to Terry Tobias, terrance_s@sbcglobal.net.

Continental Boat & RV Storage



Covered Parking - up to 12x60/Electrical Hookups/Lighted
24Hr. Access/Outside Parking/24Hr. Camera & Fence Security
continental_storages@cox-internet.com

PO Box 625 (512)417-3531
Hutto, Texas 78634 Steve & Jamie Hamby

**GUADALAJARA
RESTAURANT & CANTINA**
1525 Cypress Creek Road
219-5244

Thank you, Guadalajara Restaurant, for donating four
Neighborhood Watch signs to the Cypress Creek
Association.

Printing services donated: We wish to thank Terri Georgulas, owner of The UPS Store, 8127 Mesa Drive, #B206, Austin, 481-0520, for donating printing services for this newsletter.

Try to be a better neighbor by...

This section of the newsletter is devoted to frequent and annoying problems that are irritating our neighbors. In the long run, correcting these problems make the neighborhood a better place to live. So, let's be sensitive our neighbors' concerns. Remember, it's a two way street. If you have something bothering you, please let us know.

Fence Repair... A number of fences within the subdivision are in need of repair and staining. Fences are leaning from broken supports and slats are missing. We realize that some of these slats are hard to find, especially the 3 1/2 inch wide slats. Lowe's and Home Depot have 4 inch slats, pressure treated. Please take the time to repair your fence and stain it to make the neighborhood look good. These repairs do help sell homes in our neighborhood.

Landscaping.... Many of our homeowners and families take morning and evening walks through the neighborhood. Please be aware of your trees and shrubbery to ensure they are trimmed to allow unimpeded access to the sidewalk. It only takes a few minutes to trim back the overhead tree limbs and the shrub obstruction.

Trash Cans.... We are doing much better on the problem of putting out trash cans for Monday collection. Please do not put out your trash out until early Sunday evening. There are many reasons for this request including child and auto safety, parking for your neighbor's

visitors, and esthetics. Thank you for your cooperation.

Home Appearance... There are a number of homes in Cypress Creek whose trim and siding are showing signs of severe mold. With the fall, cooler weather and all the wet weather we have experienced, we ask homeowners to take a close look at the condition of the exterior paint. We appreciate that with seeing the house everyday, homeowners may not notice the condition of the paint as readily as your neighbors or potential home buyers. As a reminder, remember to first use an undercoat specifically designed to kill the mold prior to applying the paint.

Community Information

Baby Sitting Service

Please don't forget that on the CCHOA web site, Classified page there is a list of babysitters who reside within our community. If you would like to be listed, please let us know.

Williamson and Travis Extension Services have web sites, respectively, that offer homeowners valuable tips on everything from agriculture, food preparation, education, and pest management. Both of these services are part of the Texas A&M University System.

Williamson County Cooperative
Extension: <http://williamson-tx.tamu.edu>

Travis County Cooperative
Extension: <http://travis-tx.tamu.edu/>

Saving Money

It may be a phone call away!

If you want to save money on your cable, telephone, internet, or other monthly bill, try calling the company. Tell them you want to save money or if being pursued by their competition (which all of us are through mail and telephone marketing), quote the price from the competitor. Some companies have unannounced incentives or plans for new customers that may be applied to your account. A recent survey revealed the following monthly savings by using this approach: \$6.00 on SBC Telephone, \$38.00 on Time Warner Cable, \$7.00 on Sprint Cell. This effort yielded annual savings of \$602.00 on basically the same features and options.

In addition, NETFLIX has announced a lowering of monthly three disc rentals from \$21.00 to \$17.00. This decrease will be applied to your account automatically.

Another way to save money is to take a hard look at what you are actually using and ask for a package that suits your needs. If the telephone agent is not cooperative, ask for a supervisor.

UT Open House

The Biggest Open House in Texas is scheduled for 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., on Saturday, March 5, 2005, and will

showcase hands-on activities for Texans of all ages.

Some of the activities include:

- Solar Car Workshop
- Live at 10! You deliver the news
- Prepare for Landing
- Liquid Nitrogen Ice Cream
- Robotic Dogs
- Henna Hand Painting
- You be the Judge

This free event is a chance for explorers of all ages to see the treasures the university has to offer! Information booths around campus will supply explorers with maps, schedules and passports. Stamps collected in the passport at each activity can be traded in for a free T-shirt at the University Co-op.

A full list of events will be available in January at www.utexas.edu/events/exploreut. For more information, call the Office of Relationship Management and University Events at 512-471-7753.

Home Foreclosures

On Friday, November 19, 2004, the Austin American-Statesman reported that foreclosures in Williamson County for 2004 numbered 2,736 which is 19 percent above 2003. Travis County recorded 4,218 postings, an increase of 8 percent over 2003.

The article stated that there were two major reasons for the high foreclosure level: "...a lackluster economy..., and lenient lending standards that have allowed people to buy a house with no money down."

Make Your Christmas Tree Fire Resistant

From John Dromgoole's *Natural Gardener*

This recipe contains bleach, so be careful about getting it on a carpet or a rug.

Traditionally, a cut tree (usually a spruce or fir which is highly flammable when dry) not properly prepared, is set in homes and wrapped with electric wires. That is an invitation for a fire! Follow the directions below carefully to make your Christmas tree fire resistant.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of Karo Syrup
- 2 ounces of liquid Chlorine Bleach
- 2 pinches of Epson Salt
- ½ teaspoon of Borax
- 1 teaspoon of chelated iron
- Hot Water

The Karo Syrup, Borax and Chlorine Bleach may be purchased from the supermarket. The Epson Salt may be purchased from the drug store and the Chelated Iron (pronounced Key-Lated) may be purchased from a garden shop or plant store.

Procedure:

With a saw, make a fresh cut at the base on the tree trunk. Cut off at least an inch and try to make a flat or level cut.

Immediately after cutting the base off the tree, mix the fireproofing ingredients listed above. Fill a 2-gallon bucket with hot water to within 1 inch of the top and add the ingredients. Stir thoroughly.

Stand the trunk of the tree in this solution and leave for 24 hours.

Keep the remaining solution and place the tree in a tree-stand that contains a well for making liquids available to the tree base.

After the tree is in position for decorating, fill the tree-stand well with the solution.

Every day, without exception, fill up the well of the tree-stand with the fireproofing solution.

How this procedure works:

The Karo Syrup provides the sugar necessary to allow the base of the tree to take up water. The tree may take up to 1/5 gallons of water over a two-week period. Boron in the Borax allows the tree to move the water and sugar out to every branch and needle in the tree. Magnesium compounds in the Epson Salt and Iron from the Chelated Iron provide essential components for the production of chlorophyll that will keep the tree green. The bleach keeps mold from forming in your solution. This fireproofing procedure will also help prevent the needles from dropping and will increase the natural fragrance of the tree.

Plants and Bugs

Oak Wilt Discovered In Williamson-Travis County

By Dar Rice

Earlier this year oak wilt was discovered on Granger Lane and is currently confined in the back yard. Oak Wilt has also been confirmed at the boat storage lot behind Cedar Park High School which could affect homes along Grist Lane and Old Mill Road....a little closer to home.

This disease is spread by insects above ground and roots underground. It only affects red oaks and live oaks and occasionally blackjacks. Once a tree is infected there is no known cure. Trenching is a method of confining the infected area but it is quite expensive. More information can be obtained by contacting Curt Randa, Forester for the City of Cedar Park. (Email: randac@ci.cedar-park.tx.us or by calling (512) 258-4121 - extension 6840. Additional information may be obtained at:

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/trees/oakwilt.html>

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

<http://txforestservicetamu.edu/forest/oakwilt/default.asp>

The following two articles are from the Texas Cooperative Extension Service of Texas A&M University

Mealy bugs

With temperatures dropping, many plants that have spent the spring and summer outdoors are moving inside. Before transporting plants indoors, make a quick inspection for any insects that might be hitching a ride. Any plants that are infested should be placed in a separate area, away from uninfested plants, until insects are under control.

Mealy bugs are a common insect often seen on indoor plants. They are small, oval and wingless. These insects have long tails and are covered with wax that makes them look fluffy.

Mealy bugs have piercing-sucking mouthparts which they use to penetrate plant tissue and suck out juices. This can lead to chlorosis (yellowing of the plant), wilting and

distortion. With larger infestations, these insects may cause stunted growth, premature leaf drop or death of the plant. Mealy bugs are also known for secreting honeydew, which is a sweet, sticky substance on which a fungus called sooty mold grows.

Tips for mealy bug management:

- If you don't mind insects there are ladybug larvae that eat mealy bugs
- Wipe infested areas with a cotton ball dipped in rubbing alcohol (may want to dilute alcohol solution 25-50%)
- Insecticidal soap
- Horticultural oils
- Insecticides labeled for mealy bug control
- For severely infested plants, it may be best to throw the plant away and buy a new one

For more information, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas Cooperative Extension agent at 512.854.9600.

Carpenter Ants...tearing down the house?

Carpenter ants nest outdoors in dead wood (tree stumps or dead limbs, fences, firewood). Indoors, they can be found in wood siding, beams, joists, fascia boards or trim. Damage is usually limited since carpenter ants

tunnel and nest within in the wood; they do not eat wood. However, wood can become weakened by the ants' excavation.

Carpenter ant excavation may be identified by the clean, smooth walls. Galleries are excavated following the grain of the wood. Nest locations may be discovered by searching for piles of sawdust-looking material under exit holes. Sawdust piles may also contain soil or sand, uneaten insects as well as dead ants from the colony.

Carpenter ants are able to enter homes through tree branches or utility lines touching the home, cracks and crevices around windows and doors, cracks in foundation walls, ventilation openings or heating and air conditioning ducts.

Here are some tips to reduce the chance of a carpenter ant infestation:

- replace wood that is water damaged
- repair plumbing leaks
- prune trees & shrubs that touch the home
- remove wood debris & firewood that is near the home
- provide good ventilation under the home & in the attic
- keep exposed wood in good condition
- drain water away from the home

Don't forget the Blood Drive, Saturday, December 11, 2004, from 11 PM until 2 PM. Please contact Geoff Meiteen, gmeiteen@austin.rr.com to schedule a preferred time on a 10 minute increment.