

Saddlebrook Farms

Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2005

Happy new year from the Saddlebrook Farms homeowners association board members. As chilly weather sets in, we hope everyone is warm and safe with family and friends in 2005.

In this issue get helpful information on when and how to prune your trees as well as what you can do to protect your pets in the city.

Weatherizing for Winter

Most of us don't think about winter in South Texas the way we think about summer—that is, a season to prepare for. Below are a few tips for your house, lawn and car so that they can better survive those below freezing temperatures.

- Check door and window seals for leaks; re-caulk cracks and add weather-stripping where needed. Leaks can account for a 15-30% higher heating bill.
- If you are going out of town and a freeze is possible, set your heater thermostat no lower than 55 degrees and expose under the sink pipes by leaving doors open. This is particularly true of sinks located on outside walls.
- Turn off automatic sprinkler systems and water your garden manually. Bermuda grass goes dormant in winter. Watering plants before a freeze can help to insulate the roots from damaging frost.
- Check your car's anti-freeze. It should be changed every two years or 30,000 miles, whichever comes first. Also check the battery strength and consider new spark plugs and winter weight oil for easier, cold weather starts.

Did you know?

Damage caused by bursting water pipes is often NOT covered under the basic terms of homeowners insurance. Check your policy!



3rd Annual Holiday Decorating Contest

Congratulations to the 2004 Saddlebrook holiday decorating contest winners!

Most Traditional

- not awarded due to judging error; We apologize for this mistake.

Most Kid Friendly

- David & Brenda Saldana
9730 Horseshoe Pass

Grand Prize

- Emma & Lee Garcia
9539 Preakness Pass

New Neighbors

We would like to extend a hello and to welcome those residents who have joined our community during the last quarter:

Amanda & John Ollenburg
9619 Single Spur

Fred Brown Jr &
Lana Kay Fiedler-Brown
9731 Keeneland Run

Shannon & Tyler Elliott
9723 Keeneland Run

It's Pruning Time in South Texas

It will soon be prime pruning time in South Texas. January is a good time and February is the best time to prune most plants. Do not prune for the sake of having something to do. Before putting blade to branch, decide why you're pruning. Reasons include:

- To remove diseased or dead plant material;
- To control height and shape;
- To promote vigorous growth and blooming; or
- To promote branching.



Whatever your reason for pruning, first remove all dead and diseased branches. Cut below these areas to completely remove the diseased wood. Also remove crossing branches. If these branches are not removed, they will start rubbing against the main branch. The friction will eventually form a wound where insects and diseases can enter the tree.

Similarly, tree growth can be controlled or directed by pruning. First, establish the main branch structure. To do that, determine major branches that have good spreading habits. Remove suckers at the base of the tree and watersprouts. Watersprouts are the unsightly “sucker growth” at the base of large limbs. These branches will rob the rest of the limb of vital nutrients and water. Also, they can become a new central leader which can destroy the shape of the tree if left to grow.



When looking at directing the growth of trees, be careful not to top your tree. This improper pruning technique removes large branches leaving short stubs off the trunk of the tree. This is the worst thing you can do to the health of your tree because it removes too much of the leaf structure that the tree needs to produce food. Although many new branches may come from the stubs of topped trees, these branch connections are weak and susceptible to breaking in high winds.

Pruning paint is not necessary except in the case of live oaks and oaks in the red oak family (Schumardi, Texas red, Spanish, etc.). Paint the wounds over one-inch in diameter to protect the plant from oak wilt.

Crepe myrtles are probably the species that is most savaged by our urge to prune. They bloom on the new wood that grows in the spring so the theory is that heavy pruning stimulates lots of new wood. The theory is correct but to get the maximum bloom you do not need to hack off the tops to leave stubs. If your crepe myrtle is relatively young and growing in full sun, it may put on enough new growth that pruning is unnecessary. The good news is that crepe myrtles are very forgiving. They recover from the worst pruning and still bloom. Prune crepe myrtles in February or even March. They are slow to begin growing in the spring so you have extra time.

Adapted from “It’s time to prune your trees,” Corpus Christi Caller-Times and “It’s Pruning Time,” PlantAnswers.com.

Pets in the City

Last year a staggering **54,000** animals were picked up by San Antonio's Animal Resource Center (the "pound"), a division of the Metro Health District—the city agency responsible for promoting health and preventing disease. Of these, only **800** pets had ANY type of identification and only 2000 pets were reunited with their owners. A mere 2000 additional animals were adopted out. That leaves the city with the responsibility of euthanizing an average of 220 animals each day just to control the rampant overpopulation of cats and dogs in San Antonio. An additional **30,000** animal carcasses were removed from city streets.



Many people are sad and angry with this situation but yet many do not take basic responsibility for pet ownership which fuels the epidemic, putting San Antonio at the top of the stray animal population and euthanasia list for cities its size in this country. A few simple steps can keep your pet from becoming another statistic:

- Have your pet **spayed or neutered**. The first step in curbing overpopulation is to stop unwanted kitten and puppy births. Pets can be altered as early as 16 weeks. Females **DO NOT** have to have a litter before being spayed. Animals do not become fat and lazy from alteration and only positive behavioral changes occur.



- Put a **collar and ID tag** on your pet. Your pet is much more likely to be picked up by animal control and euthanized if it does not have identification. How else would someone know it belongs to you?
- Keep **cats inside** and **dogs on leashes**. ALL animals in San Antonio are required to be restrained at all times. Cats that remain indoors lead much healthier lives with fewer diseases. They are also unable to wreak havoc on the local bird and small animal population.

- **DO NOT DUMP AN ANIMAL!** There are many, many no-kill shelters that will accept unwanted pets. Dogs and cats are domesticated animals that rely on humans for food, shelter and love. They cannot survive in the wild, especially in winter. As the temperature drops, so do their chances of surviving a cold night.

Owning an animal is not a casual commitment. There are many serious responsibilities that go with pet ownership. Your enjoyment of a pet, the pet's health and happiness, and harmony with your neighbors all depend upon YOUR responsible pet ownership. Please do your part to keep your pets safe and the community animal-friendly.



Stop The Cycle.

For more information on spay/neuter programs, visit <http://www.snapus.org/>



The Humane Society accepts animals by appointment only. Call 226.7461 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8:30 am.

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

Tasty Recipies

Pumpkin Spice Cake

1 yellow cake mix
1 spice cake mix
1/4 cup of pumpkin
Add pumpkin pie spice to your liking
6 eggs
a little water is added if extra liquid is needed

Butter and flour a bundt pan.
Bake the cake in the oven at 375 until ready.

Glaze:

In a saucepan mix the following ingredients -
2 cups of powdered sugar
add orange juice to make a little watery (not to watery)
add 3 drops of red food coloring
add 20 drops of yellow food coloring

Put over low heat until dissolved and set aside to cool. Your glaze should thicken as it sets of the open flame. Pour over your cake once it is cooled. You may choose to put the glaze on at intervals so that the glaze does not run everywhere.

Pinklady Salad

1 can of crushed pineapple (drained)
1 bag of miniature marshmallows
1 cup of chopped pecans
Pour 1/2 of a small bag of coconut
1 large container of cool-whip
1 can of fruit cocktail (drained)
1 envelope of red or green jello (cherry-strawberry-lime)

In a large mixing bowl mix all ingredients.
Chill in refrigerator until ready to serve.
You may double the above recipe to serve more guests.

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Next Meeting:
24 January 2005

