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City of Dripping Springs Community Newsletter

THE GATEWAY

FALL 2008

Managing Oak Wilt:

Learn to identify and stop the rapid spread

Oak wilt, one of the most destructive tree diseases in the United States, is killing oak trees in the Texas Hill Country at epidemic proportions. The disease has killed more than 1 million trees in 70 Central Texas Counties.



(TEXAS FOREST SERVICE) -- Oak wilt is an infectious vascular disease caused by the fungus Ceratocystis fagacearum. The fungus invades and disables the water conducting system in susceptible trees. All oaks can be infected with oak wilt, but some species of oak are more susceptible than others. Red oaks, particularly Spanish oak, are very susceptible to the fungus. White oaks, like post oak and bur oak, are resistant to the fungus and rarely die from the disease. Live oaks are intermediate in susceptibility to oak wilt. However, they are seriously impacted by the disease

because of their tendency to form root sprouts that result in a vast interconnected root system allowing the disease to easily spread to adjacent trees.

The most reliable characteristic for diagnosing oak wilt in the field is what is called "veinal necrosis" of the live oak leaves. Apparently veinal necrosis only occurs on live oak. Symptoms on other infected oak trees are less distinct. Laboratory culture of the fungus is another way to confirm the presence of oak wilt.

Prevention plays an important role in the management of Oak wilt. Landowners and homeowners can take an active role in oak wilt prevention by taking the following steps:

- 1. Avoid pruning or wounding oaks between February 1 and July 1. The least hazardous periods for pruning are during the coldest days of midwinter or extended periods of hot weather in mid- to late summer.
2. Sterilize/sanitize all pruning equipment between trees using denatured methyl alcohol (shellac thinner), isopropyl alcohol, or a general purpose household disinfectant such as Lysol, Listerine, Pine-Sol or related products. Using household bleach is NOT recommended.
3. Immediately paint all wounds on oaks to prevent contact with contaminated beetles. Wounds should be painted, regardless of the time of year they were made, with commercial tree wound dressing or latex paint (color doesn't matter!).
4. Do not transport or buy unseasoned firewood. Seasoned firewood (dried for at least one year) should not present a threat of spreading oak wilt. Also, burning infected wood cannot transmit oak wilt.

For more information, please go to www.texasoakwilt.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS & HOLIDAYS



COMMUNITY EVENTS:

- Christmas on Mercer Street & Holiday Lighting Contest - December 6, 2008. Festival and all booths will open at 10 a.m. The annual Lighting of the Tree will be held at the Triangle at 6:30 p.m. Winners for the Holiday Lighting Contest will be announced at the Lighting of the Tree.
Founders Day Festival - April 17 -19, 2009.

2008 CITY HALL HOLIDAYS:

- Nov. 27-28 Thanksgiving
Dec. 22-26 Christmas
Dec. 31 New Years Eve



2009 CITY HALL HOLIDAYS:

- Jan. 1 New Years Day
Feb. 16 President's Day
April 10 Good Friday
May 25 Memorial Day
July 3 Independence Day
Sept. 7 Labor Day
Oct. 12 Columbus Day
Nov. 26-27 Thanksgiving Day
Dec. 24-25 Christmas
Dec. 31 New Year's Eve



Mark Your Calendar

Dripping Springs City Council is considering adopting a diseased tree ordinance to help prevent the spread of oak wilt.

Texas Forest Service Staff Forester, Eric Beckers will present a free, informational workshop on Managing Oak Wilt January 13 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. The public is encouraged to attend.



WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

Learn How to Take Care of Texas

Take Care of Texas is an effort by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to get all Texans to take some simple steps that will go far toward improving water quality, conserving water and energy, and keeping Texas clean and beautiful. Here you will find six tips to help you take care of our water.

(Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) --

- 1. Trade up to Energy Star Appliances** - Installing a more efficient dishwasher will reduce both water and energy consumption in your home. An *Energy Star* dishwasher is about 25 percent more efficient than a conventional dishwasher, and will save about 800 gallons of water per year.
- 2. Fix Leaks** - Check your faucets, and fix any leak you find. A faucet leaking at a rate of one drop per second can waste up to 1,661 gallons of water per year. If every household fixed just one leaky faucet, we could reduce water use

in Texas by more than 13 billion gallons per year.

- 3. Wash Full Loads with Cold Water** - Washing full loads as opposed to partial loads of laundry can save an average household more than 3,400 gallons of water each year. Using cold water for laundry instead of hot or warm water can save the average household more than \$30 annually.
- 4. Install Low-Flow Shower heads and Faucet Aerators** - Installing a low-flow shower head can be the single most effective water-saving step that you can take inside of your home - reducing water consumption

by 25 to 60 percent, and saving up to \$145 each year on energy costs. A faucet aerator can cut water consumption in half.

- 5. Invest in a New Low-Flow Toilet** - Toilets are by far the main source of water use in the home, accounting for 30 percent of residential indoor water consumption. If you replace an older toilet with a high-efficiency toilet that uses 1.3 gallons of water per flush, you can save 4,000 gallons of water per year, the equivalent to a 17-year drinking supply for one person.
- 6. Collect and Use Rainwater** - Rainwater can be used to water

your lawn, plants, flowers, trees and shrubs. By collecting rainwater for outdoor use during the peak summer months, you can save 1,300 gallons of water. If all Texas households collected rainwater for their watering needs, we could keep over 10 billion gallons of water in our aquifers, lakes and rivers.

For more information, go to TCEQ's web site at www.tceq.state.tx.us.

*Need Information?
Our Web Site Has Plenty!*

If you are seeking information on Council and Commission meeting schedules, ordinances, fees or permit applications, this information has been posted for your convenience on the City of Dripping Springs web site at www.cityofdrippingsprings.com

Wastewater System Update:

The City of Dripping Springs wastewater service is now available to Water Supply Corporation customers who have submitted applications and \$100 deposit for indication of interest to connect. City officials are currently soliciting bids from plumbers to begin the process. Work is anticipated to begin as early as January 2009. To date, more than 100 customers have been connected.

The City of Dripping Springs is proud to announce that wastewater service will soon be available for customers with approved applications.

In order for the physical connection to occur, much coordination and communication will be needed between the City and the property owners. Please watch your mail for

communications from the City of Dripping Springs in upcoming weeks and months ahead.

In order to move forward in the process, property owners must understand the requirements for physical connection, provide the security deposit and signed Commercial or Residential Billing Agreement, and also provide a signed "Right of

Entry Agreement" form to allow City's representatives and contractors to go onto the service address to work on the wastewater connection.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call Rebeca Rubio, Utilities Coordinator at Dripping Springs City Hall at 512-858-4725.

CodeRED Notification System Online

The CodeRED System gives city officials the ability to deliver pre-recorded emergency telephone notification and/or information messages to targeted areas or the entire city at a rate of up to 60,000 calls per hour.

The City of Dripping Springs has contracted with Emergency Communications Network, Inc., of Ormond Beach, Florida for its CodeRED high speed telephone emergency notification services.

Michelle Fischer, City Administrator, cautioned that such systems are only as good as the telephone database supporting them. "If your phone number is not in the database, you will not be called in an emergency situation." The CodeRED system gives individuals and businesses the ability to add their own

phone numbers directly to the system's telephone database. Contact information will be kept completely confidential.

To ensure no one is omitted, City Officials urge all individuals and businesses to log on to the City of Dripping Springs web site at www.cityofdrippingsprings.com, and follow the link to the CodeRED Data Collection page. Those without internet may call City Hall at 512-858-4725 to give their information over the phone. No one should automatically assume his or her number is included.

WINES, SUNSETS AND STARS ...

As magnificent vineyards have dotted the Texas Hill Country, wine enthusiasts have searched the countryside near and far for education and tasting events to gain overall knowledge of the industry and products. With more than 150 wineries in Texas, it can be hard to visit them all. Search no more! The City of Dripping Springs, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department is thrilled to announce its first ever small group Hill Country and Texas Tasting Program.

In early November, the Parks Department hosted its first wine tasting at the Harrison Ranch Park farm house, located at the newest of City Parks across from Dripping Springs Elementary School on Ranch Road 12. The kick-off event was a tremendous success with more than 30 adult participants.

During the event, wine enthusiasts were served an array of edibles as they learned about the wines they tasted. With a quaint home and 64 acres of rolling Hill Country landscape, the setting



made a perfect retreat. In addition, local artists' works were displayed.

Deputy City Administrator Ginger Faught said the City is excited to offer a recreational program that caters to adults and older citizens. "Many of our programs are typically geared toward the youth," Faught said. "This will be something that encourages our adults to utilize our park system more," she said.

After a spectacular first event, tentative dates for upcoming wine, beer and food tastings have been set for February 28, April 25, June 27 and August 22, 2009. Come enjoy a *Hill Country and Texas Tasting* on the porch of the farm house with your friends and neighbors while watching the sun set and stars rise. For a nominal fee per person, this is one of the best values available in the Hill Country.

Registration forms are available on the City of Dripping Springs web site at www.cityofdrippingsprings.com. If you have additional questions, call Ashley Seay at 512-858-4725.

There will be limited space, so register early and let us know how many friends will be joining you.

*All dates are subject to change.

How you can help avoid sewer problems

Never put grease, oil or egg shells down your sink. When grease and egg shells combine they create a mixture similar to concrete, which can then clog the sewer line. Most often this type of clog will occur in your private yard line, meaning you will be responsible for the repair. Keep a small, heat safe container handy to contain these items. When the container is full, place it in your garbage.

Always use a basket or strainer in sink drains to prevent food scraps from going into the drain or garbage disposal. Empty the basket or strainer into a sealed container before placing it in the trash.

Harsh liquids, chemicals, pesticides and petroleum products must never be disposed of in the sewer system. Take these unwanted products to an authorized disposal site. For more information, call the Hays County Recycle Station on FM 150 at 512-858-9515.

Avoid trees with shallow, spreading root systems. Tree Roots tend to grow toward sources of water (i.e. sewer pipes). If you are putting in landscaping, choose trees with deep root systems.

Never place the following items down your sink, bath, shower or toilet: medications, automotive fluids, paint and glue products, poisons and insecticides, gas, kerosene and lighter fluids, fertilizers, oven, floor and furniture cleaners, moth balls, nail, shoe and metal polish, egg shells, grease or oil.

Common sense can go a long way when it comes to protecting our sewer system. It is always important to review the City of Dripping Springs Pre-Treatment Ordinance for more information. Please call the City Hall at 512-858-4725 for a copy of it today. Every customer is responsible to make sure the grease, harsh chemicals, pesticides and petroleum products stay out of the sewer system.

For questions or to report a wastewater emergency, please contact our wastewater operators by calling 512-894-3322.

For appropriate disposal information, call the Hays County Recycle Station at 512-858-9515.

Harrison Ranch Park Horseback Riding



Come enjoy a relaxing ride around our rolling 64 acre park. Take your horse on a stroll through the back country woods and enjoy the untouched nature of our park. Use one of our riding arenas or corrals to teach a young rider. The possibilities are endless! Rental forms and permit applications are available at City Hall and on our web site at www.cityofdrippingsprings.com.

Hours of Operation:

Dawn 'til Dusk

Permit Fees:

Resident \$5 drop-in fee or Annual Family Permit \$200

Non-Resident \$10 drop-in fee or Annual Family Permit \$300

Requirements:

Coggins certificate required and permit displayed

Call 512-858-4725 today to find out how you can rent the arena and ranch house for your special events.

Inside Next Issue:

New Developments
Founders Day Festival
Parks and Recreation News



“Preserving Texas Hill Country for its people and their recreation and leisure, for its history and the sense of place, for its beauty and the open space.”

City of Dripping Springs

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Your Council Members:

Todd Purcell, Mayor

Bill Foulds, Mayor Pro Tem

Santos Alba, Councilman

Doug Phillip, Councilman

Joe Volpe, Councilman

H.A. “Spider” Williams, Councilman