

Apalachee Plantation

Homeowners' Association Newsletter

Furnace Maintenance

AFTER the scorching summer, we're all looking forward to cooler weather. Before we know it, frost will have finished off our tomatoes and we'll be switching from air conditioning to heat. Regular maintenance will prolong the life of your furnace and protect your family from the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning, fire, or just a cold night without heat.

Most gas furnaces produce carbon monoxide which is removed through the furnace vent. However, as furnaces age, more carbon monoxide may be released than the vent removes. Annual inspection by a qualified HVAC professional will help to prevent that, and lower your heating costs by up to 5%.

Frequently changing air filter promotes clean burning, and lessens dust in the furnace and house. When dust and dirt get into the blower and coils your furnace works harder, increasing your heating bill, and shortens its life. Some sources suggest changing the filter monthly, while others recommend every few months.

As the filter fills with particles, airflow is restricted. This makes your furnace (or AC) work harder, raising your energy bills and shortening the life of the unit. So, the better the filter, the more frequently you should change it. Inspect your filter monthly. If it

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Pruning: what, when, how

IS YOUR house slowly (or rapidly) disappearing behind that once beautiful and perfectly sized tree or shrub? Are you tired of having to trim your bushes back to size every

time it rains? When do you trim flowering shrubs to ensure flowers next year?

Here are a few guidelines for pruning:

- Do your homework. Plant trees and shrubs that will only grow to fill the space you have for them. There are many naturally small and dwarf varieties of plants to choose from. Consider average and maximum height and width along with water and sun needs.
- Remove dead, dying, diseased, and insect infected branches. Remember to wipe down your blades with rubbing alcohol between cuts to prevent spreading the problem to other parts of the plant.

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Water Use Restrictions Continue

This article is from the Gwinnett County website: <http://www.gwinnettcountry.com/cgi-bin/gwincty/egov/ep/gcfaq.do?contentid=1666&departid=55>

GWINNETT County Water Resources Water Ban Information; as you may know, we are still in a Level 4 Drought the following restrictions are implemented until further notice.

All water use should abide by an even-odd address schedule. If your address is Odd such as: 1, 3, 5, 7, or 9, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays if your address is even such as: 0, 2, 4, 6, 8, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays.

Swimming pools may be filled or topped off between April 1st and September 30th.

Established plants may be watered by hand for 25 minutes per day between the hours of midnight and 10am. If your house number ends in an odd number you may water on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. If your house number ends in an even number you may water on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays.

All watering for established plants must be done with a handheld hose equipped with a standard spray nozzle that automatically turns off when released.

For newly planted seed, sod, or landscaping, irrigation or sprinkler systems may be used following strict limitations and guidelines. You may water 30 days during the first 10 weeks. For more information on these strict limitations and guidelines, please visit and register at www.urbanagcouncil.com.

Large areas of new vegetation may be watered by sprinklers.

No recreational vehicles of any kind may be washed including but not limited to cars, trucks, boats, ATV's, motorcycles, trailers or motor homes.

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Too Many Rabbits, Too Few Raptors



RABBITS are becoming quite a common site in our gardens, usually chowing down our most expensive and cherished plants. In what is likely a direct correlation to the high number of rabbits is the lack of hawks in our neighborhood. Hawks are a major player in controlling rodents like rats and rabbits, reptiles, and amphibians. Without hawks, we are seeing an increase in rodents, particularly rabbits, and other of their prey species.

What kills hawks? Poison kills rats, rabbits, and other rodents destroying our gardens. However, if a hawk catches and eats a poisoned animal before the poison does its job, the animal dies because the hawk killed it, but the hawk gets poisoned and may die. The more poisons we put out, the more hawks and scavenger birds will be killed. We may also kill more pets as they also chase and eat the same animals hawks do. Curious children are also at risk.

Safe alternatives Please think twice before using poisons in our neighborhood. There are other effective methods of pest control available. One is pepper spray. Rabbits, squirrels, and insects don't like it. Birds and plants aren't affected by it, so spray your plants, including vegetables, and bird feeders.

Clove oil and peppermint sprays are highly effective against crawling insects. They have strong aromas, so are best used outside. They make highly effective foundation sprays to keep insects out of the house. Clove oil sprays also kill plants, and are great for controlling weeds and Bermuda in the gardens.

Don't kill harmless snakes. They eat all sorts of small rodents and other pests, and may keep venomous snakes out of their territory—your yard.

And, remember, since hawks eat snakes, the more hawks that live in our neighborhood the fewer snakes we will have to worry about.

Community Contact Information

- **Police non-emergency number: 770-513-5100.** The citizens of Gwinnett County may call the Non-emergency number 770-513-5100 to report non-urgent incidents that require a police response such as loud music, lost wallets, cell phones, and passports, non-violent animal complaints, etc. The same dispatchers who answer the 911 calls also answer the non-emergency number, so be patient. 911 calls will be answered first then the non-emergency phone.
- **Police: 770-513-5000** for information of towed vehicles, obtaining copies of reports, traffic ticket information, follow-up on reports or to speak with a specific officer or detective.
- **Sheriff: 770-619-6500** For information on information on prisoners, warrants, and the civil process.
- **Fire/EMS:** Contact Gwinnett County Fire Department at 678-518-4800 when requesting information on burning permits, inspections and billing questions, and educational presentations. The numbers for individual fire stations cannot be given out.
- **Call before you dig: 770.623.4344** Before you dig on your property you are required by State Law to notify the Utilities Protection Center at 770.623.4344. They will contact all utilities for you.
- **Quality of Life Violations: www.gwinnettcounty.com.** For the 24 Hour Code Violation Reporting Hotline, call 770.417.3434 extension 52. For the 24 Hour Erosion Control Violation Reporting Hotline, call 678.518.6099. The Police Quality of Life unit handles code of compliance and ordinance enforcement issues. Violations can be reported online at www.gwinnettcounty.com. To request updates or information about previously submitted violations, call 770.417.3434 or send an email to the Code Compliance general email box at qualityoflife@gwinnettcounty.com. NOTE: Georgia's Open Records Act requires disclosure upon request of any information about a complaint.
- **Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful: www.gwinnettcba.org or call 770.822.5187.** GCB can assist you with questions on recycling, commercial and residential trash pick up, graffiti and litter.
- **Home-buying education, counseling, and mortgage assistance www.theimpactgroup.org.** To provide housing assistance in Gwinnett County, the County contributes to The Impact Group, a non-profit, community development corporation that arranges emergency and transitional shelter for homeless people, helps revitalize low-income neighborhoods, and offers home-buying education, counseling, and mortgage assistance.

Furnace Maintenance from page 1

is dark and clogged, change it. Smoking and pets in the house will clog filters more quickly.

For further information: <http://www.nationalfurnace.com/advice.htm>

http://www.alliantenergygeothermal.com/stellent2/groups/public/documents/pub/phtv_se_he_ma_000606.hcsphouse will clog filters more quickly.

Board Members and Contact Information

President: Lee Adkins

Vice President: Ren Burnette

Secretary: Carolyn Neira

Treasurer: Madeline Andrade

Member-at-large: Salvador Fuentes

E-mail: Contact Any HOA Board Member at: apalacheeplantation@yahoo.com

Mailing address: PO Box 923; Dacula, GA 30019

Website: www.apalacheeplantation.com

Lee Adkins can be reached at: 404-432-6878

Monthly Gardening Advice from the Gwinnett County Extension Service

September

- Prune ornamental shrubs for shape only.
- Divide and transplant ornamental grasses such as liriope. Now is also a good time to divide iris and daylillies.
- Fertilize roses early in the month; this is the last application until spring.

October

- October is the best time for planting in the landscape. Ornamental trees and shrubs can be planted, perennial flowers can be transplanted or divided, fall bulbs can be planted and annual flowers such as pansies and dianthus should be planted.
- Cut back annual and perennial flowers as they begin to fade.
- As crops are harvested in the vegetable garden, destroy debris to prevent the buildup of insects and diseases.
- As leaves begin to fall, start a home compost pile to use as organic material in next year's garden.
- October is the perfect time to begin taking soil tests from your lawn and garden. Remember, it takes three months for lime to react with soils. Soil testing early gives ample time to apply lime if needed and get your garden ready for next season.

November

- Continue planting ornamental shrubs and trees to make new additions to your landscape.

- Mulch plant beds and trees with shredded fallen leaves, pine straw, compost or other material.
- Watch for winter weeds in turf areas as lawn areas go dormant and control as needed.
- Clean garden area of weeds and dead crops.

December

- Continue renewing mulch around plant beds and composting fallen leaves.
- Plant shrubs and trees.
- Begin working on next years garden plan.

Pruning, from page 1

- Look for 'V' junctions between stem and trunk on trees. 'V' junctions are weak and prone to snap in strong winds. 'U' junctions are strong joins.
- Prune and pinch back spring-flowering plants in late spring. This will encourage more branching, which means more flowers. Pruning after buds are starting to form leads to less flowers.
- Plants that flower on current growth, including abelia, crape myrtle, hibiscus and rose, are best pruned when dormant.
- Deciduous trees are best pruned when dormant. Larger trees are best left to professional arborists.

For further information: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG087>

Pruning Landscape Trees and Shrubs1
Edward F. Gilman and Robert J. Black2

Ads can be placed for \$15 per year for homeowners and \$25 per year for non-homeowners.

Contact the HOA

Owners' Update

HOME OWNERS, thank you very much for your prompt payment of Association Dues. This allows us to continue to maintain the common areas of our neighborhood and pay the tax assessment made on our neighborhood by the county.

Because all residents are legally responsible for the upkeep of our neighborhood, and additionally, benefit from it through increased home values, we are continuing to place liens on homes where amounts owed are in excess of \$400. Since the charges include an ongoing monthly late fee of \$10 until dues are paid along with legal fees it does not take long to reach \$400.

Prompt payment of dues are in every owner's best interests as the funds go directly to the care of the neighborhood, and are the least expensive option for home owners.

Water Use Restrictions from page 1

Pressure washing can ONLY be done by a licensed professional.

For more information please contact us by e-mail at DWRWaterBanQuestions@GwinnettCounty.com or hold on the line for a representative.

We appreciate all of Gwinnett County Water Resources customer's efforts in reducing their usage by 10 percent as mandated by Governor Perdue. As these water restrictions change in the future, we will update this information as soon as readily available. Thank you.



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Pre-emergent Weed Control: When is Best?

THIS summer we've had a slight relief in our lawn care with more rain than last year, and the quality of our neighborhood lawns reflect that. However, the extreme heat was a major stress to our lawns. And, stress in lawns usually leads to more weeds. Not all weed control products will work in every case. Post-emergent weed control needs to specifically target the type of weeds in your yard.

In our area, while two pre-emergent treatments (mid-September and early March) are good, three treatments minimize the need for post-emergent control. For best results, apply a pre-emergent in mid-September, mid-February, and in May. Pre-emergents last in the soil from anywhere to 60-120 days. The third application helps prevent later germination during our long growing season as the earlier applications wear off.

With both pre- and post-emergent controls, read the labels carefully as more than one type may be needed, and improper application can lead to poor results and environmental damage.

For more information: http://www.homeimprovementmag.com/Articles/2006/06Jul_garden.html; 2006 Georgia Pest Management Handbook: www.ent.uga.edu/pmh/index.html; University of Georgia, Griffin Weed ID site: www.griffin.uga.edu/grf/dept/cropsci/turf/weed-control/homepage.shtml; Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council: www.gaepcc.org

When to call: 9-1-1

DIAL 911 to report any incident that requires immediate dispatch of police, fire, or an ambulance.

- *Medical Emergency*
- *Fire*
- *Motor Vehicle Accidents*
- *Suspicious Vehicles or persons*
- *To report incidents of auto theft, burglary, rape, arson, assault, robbery, shoplifting, disturbances, theft, domestic violence, fights, missing persons, shootings, stabbing, destruction of property, all crimes in progress or just occurred, etc*
- *To report road hazards, drunk drivers or reckless drivers, wires down, tornado's*
- *If you are unsure your situation is an emergency, call 911*

Electric Lighting Safety

This is the time of year when many start putting up decorative holiday lighting. Please keep in mind the following guidelines to prevent fires.

- Inspect all wires and do not use any that are frayed or damaged. All lights should carry the mark of an approved testing laboratory.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Do not connect more than three strings of lights.
- Connect all lighting to a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupting (GFCI) outlet.
- Use an extension cord with a higher rating.
- Periodically check for heat. Wires should not be warm to the touch.
- Do not secure wiring with staples or nails
- A blown fuse or broken circuit indicates an overload. Reduce the load on the circuit before replacing fuse or resetting the circuit.
- Do not leave holiday lights on unattended
- Take down your lights after the holidays. Wrap cords loosely to prevent wire damage.