

PRIME'S CLIPPINGS

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Spring Will Be Here Before You Know It!

Although some may not have enjoyed this year's wintry weather, it has really been good for our landscapes when you look at the big picture. Other than a couple weeks after the big Cowboy loss when we hit the seventies, it has been staying cool enough to keep most plants in a state of dormancy, which helps keep many plants from blooming too early and losing their blooms to a late freeze. The rains have been regular enough to allow us to leave our sprinklers off, saving money and preserving resources for the inevitably hot summer ahead.

The hard freeze we had Jan. 7-9th may have burned a few zone 8 plants such as fatsia or oleander, and may even have damaged the roots of dormant zone 9 plants like esperanza if they were not well mulched. Fortunately the bitter cold only lasted a few days so most of our plants should be fine. We will just have to wait and see. By mid March we should know which plants may need to be cut back or replaced.

Be sure and check this newsletter for gardening reminders, and start getting psyched up for Spring!

Pruning And Transplanting

This Is The Month!

Trees: The dormant season is *the* time to remove low limbs on trees or do other corrective pruning since you can see the complete structure of the tree. If you have mistletoe, now is the only time to remove it. Once the leaves have flushed it is near impossible to see and much more difficult to get to. Mistletoe is nearly impossible to eliminate, but infested trees should be cleaned out every 2-3 years. Smaller infected limbs can be removed completely, but large limbs and trunks should simply have the mistletoe scraped or broken off without damage to the soft green tissue under

the bark. Mistletoe is a parasitic plant that actually roots into the tree limbs and removes moisture and nutrients from the tree. The berries contain seeds that are spread by birds.

Shrubs: February is the best time to make any severe pruning cuts on overgrown shrubs. Some of our local shrubs get too large or woody with age, and often can be made into a whole new plant with a drastic pruning. A prime example of a shrub that might do well with this is variegated privet. Variegated privets can grow well beyond their intended use in a foundation planting, yet they

are widely used for their attractive whitish-yellow foliage. An overgrown privet will flush with colorful new growth that you can keep in a smaller form for a few years if coppiced.

Perennials: This is also the month to finish trimming back perennials such as salvias, fountain grasses, asters, and lantanas. Groundcovers such as lirioppe and Asian jasmine should also be cut back before they sprout with new growth. Unless we get an unusual stretch of several days in the low 20s or teens there shouldn't be any freeze damage to freshly pruned plants. *Continued on page 2 >>*

Our goal is to fulfill the needs of the customer by providing timely, quality services and products.

Thank you for your business!

...Cont. from pg. 1

Roses should be cut back in Feb. too.

Transplanting: This is the last month that you can transplant shrubs and trees with the greatest chance of success. As warm weather approaches plants will use their energy reserves to begin their spring flush. Moving

them now gives them the opportunity to develop new healthy roots before hot weather. We are often asked if we can move large trees. In some cases it may be cost effective, but many people don't realize how much work goes into balling a tree to move. Unless we are able to drive a loader in to lift the tree out, the

size and weight of the root ball for a 3 caliper inch tree is about all that can be handled without equipment. An exception would be crape myrtles and yaupon holly trees. They are more forgiving when it comes to the size of the root ball needed, so we can often move very large specimens.

A New Look For Your Invoice

We began in January the process of combining our accounting programs in an effort to improve our record keeping, simplify our accounts receivables, and provide you with a clear, easy to read monthly statement.

The manufacturers of our scheduling and accounting programs designed a module that links these two systems more efficiently. In the process, we redesigned our invoices somewhat. One of the biggest changes is that everyone will now have an invoice number for each month. In the past only some of our commercial accounts were tracked with sequential invoice numbers, now everyone is.

You may also notice your job descriptions are now in lower case letters, and we have changed the wording slightly to offer better consistency. You will of course continue to receive the same services you have always had. As an example, for our standard mowing job, we had some customers set

up with "Mow, edge, blow" and some with "Mow, edge, trim". The trim referred to weedeating but was confusing terminology. Now all of our mow jobs have the same notation "Mow, edge, blow"

To assist us in scheduling correctly, we also have a job notation for "Mow, edge, blow biweekly" for the spring and fall. It will help us to avoid unnecessary trips to a property that is not in need of weekly mowing. We still ask that customers not on a pro-rated 12 month contract call to let us know when you want to go from weekly to bi-weekly and vice versa.

Of course we can assume there will be a few wrinkles to iron out during this transition, so if you see anything on your invoice that you don't understand or think may be incorrect please don't hesitate to call. Let Petra or Sally know what it is and we will address the issue immediately.

Switch to E-mail and Be a Patriot!

Remember—we can e-mail your invoice *and* our award winning newsletter each month. Going electronic is not only convenient, you are also conserving our country's natural resources. We are using less paper and saving the petroleum used to ship that paper and deliver that mail. Your e-mail is strictly for use with our company. We will never share your information with anyone.

February Jobs

- Mow rye regularly
- Fertilize rye grass
- Apply pre-emergent & broadleaf herbicides
- Prune low limbs on trees
- Trim groundcovers
- Mulch beds
- Prune dormant perennials & fountain grasses
- Finalize plans now for new beds
- Plant and transplant trees and shrubs
- Install that new sprinkler system!

And we also want to remind you that we take major credit cards. Just call Petra or Sally with your credit card info. We can bill you for just the one time or set you up to bill your credit card monthly. Save a stamp and earn those airline miles and points!

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