FERN BLUFF
Municipal Utility District

2023 - Q1 Fern Bluff MUD Newsletter

Addressing Stormwater Pollution

Tips to help us preserve our environment by reducing stormwater pollution during spring lawn beautification.

Correctly identify insect and weed problems?

Only about a third of yard and garden owners take the time or trouble to correctly identify the insect or weed problems they are having. After identifying a specific problem, the first line of defense is to change the conditions that invite pest problems, such as overwatering, improper mowing, etc. If the problems persist, choose an organic or conventional product that best addresses your situation; spot treat for problems and do not use a weed and feed lawn product unless your problem is widespread. And always read and follow label directions.

Use well-adapted or native plants in your landscaping?

Avoid growing invasive plant species. Locally adapted plants require less water, fertilizer, pruning, and pesticides. Choose plants that can provide food and shelter for birds and other wildlife. Add flowering annuals and perennials that can attract birds, butterflies, and bees, which are important pollinators. Only a quarter of yard and garden owners say they are careful to choose well-adapted plants.

Important Reminder!

Do not blow leaves, grass, or chemicals into storm drains (curb cuts.) Our storm drains empty into Brushy Creek. Please help keep it clean!

Ice Storm Impact to the District

County authorities have assessed the impact of the February Ice storm and report that we have lost 30% of our tree canopy. This is especially true regarding the damage to our District Parks. Our landscapers along with our operations team rapidly went to work after the storm to clear debris off our trails and clearing out of downed trees. Work will continue to clean out our parks and greenbelts over the next few months. The parks are open, but please be wary of any broken/hanging branches in trees as they can fall at any time until our teams can get them removed. If you see any extremely precarious hanging branches, please let us know.

Just a reminder to our residents that all limbs and debris are the homeowner's responsibility for removal.

Legislative Update

Our legal team is watching several Texas legislative bills that could affect our MUD. Following are a couple that we thought our residents should be aware of:

- HB 1793 (Rep. Swanson) Relating to the qualifications for serving as a member of the board of directors of a municipal utility district.
    - This bill would require a person to be a landowner within a municipal utility district in order to qualify to serve on the district's board of directors. Under current law, a person is qualified if she or he is 18 years of age; is a resident of the state; and *either* (i) owns land within the district or (ii) is a qualified voter within the district.

- HB 2667 (Rep. Rosenthal) Relating to the property tax rate imposed by a municipal utility district.
    - This bill would limit the amount of property taxes a municipal utility district may impose to $1 per $100 of valuation.

Spring Landscape Tips

Our Landscaper Jack Gardner, Texas Lawn and Garden have the following advice for our residents:

Preparing your lawn for spring green-up

- Mow your lawn short in the early spring and remove the lawn clippings. This will allow the sun to warm the soil near the root zone and promote growth.
- Begin watering once your lawn begins to actively grow. If you have not done so yet, it is a good idea to perform an irrigation check to recalibrate your system. Established turf generally needs ½" to 1" of water per week. Ideally this comes from mother nature, but an irrigation audit will tell you how long you need to run your system to achieve this goal.
- Water early in the morning if possible. By watering early in the morning, you will lose less water through evaporation due to wind, sun, and higher temperatures.
- It is better to water in two or more run times on your days to water to avoid run-off. This gives the water time to move deeper into the soil.
- If you still have a thick layer to thatch (dead grass) after mowing then you can use a leaf rake to remove more of that layer, this will allow more sunlight and air to circulate around the newly emerging lawn.
- After your second to third mowing, you can top dress the lawn with ¼" of screened organic compost. This is a very important step to help the lawn get through the hot summer months.
- If your lawn has been compacted over time through heavy use, then an aeration before top dressing can be very beneficial. Mark all irrigation heads before aerating.
- Do not fertilize until the lawn is actively growing and then use sparingly and organically if you have not had a soil test performed in recent years. By having a soil analysis done you can work with your county extension office to recommend the appropriate amounts and types of treatments for the soil underneath your lawn.

These tips will help you get your lawn ready for the harsh realities of a central Texas summer.

Important Note Regarding Greenbelts and Parks

If a homeowner or contractor feels that they need access through or across any MUD or HOA owned property, (greenbelts, parks, other common areas including parking lots) for private house construction or landscape projects, PRIOR WRITTEN PERMISSION must be requested and approved by the affected entity BEFORE any work is started. Please contact the MUD office at 512-238-0606 or email the general manager at GM@fernbluffmud.org.*