



Mountain House Community Services District Newsletter

February
2016

"To Provide Quality Services to the Community"

MAINTENANCE STANDARDS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD STREET TREES

As we all start the New Year we must keep in mind that our gardens and landscape must be prepared to begin a new year as well. Once the final litter of tree leaves have fallen and been collected, the next big chore is to prune our trees to prepare them for the coming season. As we described in our January Newsletter, certain requirements must be followed when pruning trees that are located in parkway strips and front yards. We also provided diagrams on how our trees will develop if pruned correctly. If this is your first time pruning a tree, or if you are interested in improving your skills and knowledge, we recommend purchasing a book on proper pruning techniques that you can refer to year after year. Sunset Western Garden Book is an excellent publication for guidance in pruning and overall gardening.

If you wish to immediately get started, we have a few tips that you can follow that will be beneficial to the tree and improve the appearance once leaves start to push out in the spring:

- Before starting any pruning tasks, completely remove fallen leaves from the ground and the base of the tree. Use a strong leaf rake to assure every leaf is removed. This will help the ground breath and prevent root and crown rot issues.
- If your tree still has a tree stake, you may need to remove it. If your tree is over one year old and the trunk is twice the diameter of the stake, it is more than likely ready to have tree stakes removed. A tree that stands without the help of tree stakes develops a very strong trunk and root system.
- As you prepare to prune your tree it is very important to step back and study the layout of the limbs and branches. You are essentially shaping and training the habit of the tree. Always keep in mind that a good pruning job once completed will appear as if the tree looks perfectly normal. Compare it to getting your own hair cut.
- Trees consist of a trunk, limbs, branches and twigs. Prioritize the removal of twigs and branches that are dead, damaged, rub, cross, or pointing downward. Thin the interior of the tree to allow good circulation of air. Always remember, on young trees the branches that remain might be main limbs as the tree matures, so do not prune aggressively.
- Once branches and twigs are addressed, limbs are next. Be very careful not to remove important (upright) limbs that add to the symmetry of the tree. The most common limbs that should be removed are nearest the ground that overhang walkways or block important signs along the parkway strips.

SCHEDULE OF MHCSO EVENTS

Board meetings and committee meetings are held in the Michael Forbes McGrew Board Room at the CSD office. For class and event locations please see below. If you would like additional information on the classes or events please contact Angel Lamb at alamb@sjgov.org.

Youth Action Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Time: 7:00 pm

For more information please contact Director Tingle at btingle@sjgov.org

MHCSO Board of Directors Meeting

Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Time: 7:00 pm

Incorporation Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday, February 11, 2016

Time: 7:00 pm

For more information please contact Director Lamb at jlamb@sjgov.org

Library Design Public Workshop II

Date: Thursday, February 11, 2016

Time: 5:30 pm – 9:00pm

Location: MHHS Multi-Purpose Room

Mountain House Annual Blood Drive

Date: Saturday, February 20, 2016

Time: 10:00 am – 2:00pm

Location: MH Welcome Center

For more information please email Angel Lamb at alamb@sjgov.org

Public Safety Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Time: 7:00 pm

For more information please contact Director Lucid at blucid@sjgov.org

Library Design Public Workshop III

Date: Saturday, March 5, 2016

Time: 10:00 am – 12:30pm

Location: MHHS Multi-Purpose Room

PUBLIC LIBRARY WORKSHOPS

Come help design your new library! On Saturday, January 9th we held the first in our series of Workshops with the Mountain House Developers and architects to discuss the design of the new Mountain House Public Library. The workshop took place from 10 am to noon where the experts in the field of library design lead a visual display of design, form and function. This community workshop is a first for the community to have an opportunity to input into the design, look and feel of the new library expected to be ready for occupancy in early 2019. Our next workshop will be on Thursday, February 11, 2016 from 6pm – 9pm at the Mountain House High School Multipurpose Room, where the focus will be driven on the information that was obtained at January's workshop. We hope to see you there.

- Most importantly, do not top or pollard the tree. Old school practices once included topping trees by cutting back the lead branches to control height. This deforms the tree and actually produces suckering. Pollarding trees is a practice you see most commonly with Mulberry Trees. This is where you see the limbs cut nearly back to the trunk every year or so.

Next month we will cover topics on tree health on how to diagnose issues and apply corrective measures. For specifications on tree pruning you may refer to January's Newsletter or you may find complete guidelines on our website under Mountain House residential Guidelines Appendix F.

MISTLETOE CONTROL FOR NEIGHBORHOOD TREES

In December standing under the mistletoe would bring you to believe that you might be in store for a peck on the cheek. In January it isn't quite as romantic, more likely it means that mistletoe is growing in a tree in your yard. If you discover this unique plant growing way up in the canopy of your dormant tree, it was probably deposited there from a bird. Mistletoe is established when a bird eats the berries from a neighboring mistletoe plant and while roosting in your tree, deposits the seeds on a branch in their droppings. The parasitic plant quickly grows roots into the host tree drawing water, nutrients and finally in late winter, the female plant berries emerge for hungry birds and the cycle repeats itself.

Mistletoe reveals itself in the winter when leaf fall from deciduous trees is complete. It is highly recommended to remove this parasitic plant when discovered to prevent the decline of the host tree that may eventually result in death. It is also equally important due to the rapid spread of the plant to adjacent trees due to the berries being irresistible to birds.

There are several ways to control mistletoe. Simple removal of the plant fails to extract the root that is embedded past the bark into the soft wood of the tree. This task will need to be performed yearly and will impact the trees health year to year. Chemical regulators available to control the plant are inconsistent, and have a low success rate even after multiple applications. The best practice is to prune the infected branch from the tree. To assure you capture the root of the plant, cut at least 12 inches from where the plant is attached or best yet, remove the entire branch at the nearest connected lateral. Severe multiple infestations might require that the entire tree be removed and replaced.

The Mountain House CSD performs yearly mistletoe control on District properties starting in late fall. Branch removal is the method used to assure a permanent solution. Hopefully with a combined effort to control this pesky parasite, the only mistletoe we will see, will be during the Holidays hanging in a spot you least suspect!

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OFFICE CLOSURE

Please note the Mountain House Community Services Offices will be closed the following dates:

- Monday, February 15, 2016

DID YOU KNOW?

Storm drains: discharge directly to our lakes, creeks, and waterways *UNTREATED*. This is why it is dangerous and illegal to dispose of carpet cleaning water in the storm drain system. Wastewater contains toxic chemicals and can harm humans, sensitive habitats, and wildlife.

Pet waste: can make our water unsafe for drinking, fishing, swimming, and other types of recreation. If it's not disposed of properly, pet waste can be carried by stormwater runoff to storm drains that empty untreated into our streams, creeks, and rivers. Pet waste contains bacteria and viruses that can contaminate waterways and make living things unhealthy. Pet waste also has nutrients that promote excessive algae growth in lakes and streams. When the algae die and decompose, it robs the water of dissolved oxygen that fish and other aquatic life needs to survive.

Tough Stuff Chemicals: Do you have "tough stuff" chemicals in your house? Many household cleaners are advertised as:

TOUGH on stains!

FIGHTS odors!

CUTS the grease!

WORKS HARD so you don't have to!

And this is not false advertising. The chemicals that make our cleaners strong can also make them poisonous to people and pets. Sometimes we find it easier to let harsh chemicals do the hard work of cleaning. And if we dispose of these chemicals improperly, they become household hazardous waste that can contaminate our water.

For more information please contact San Joaquin County Household Hazardous Waste Facility at 209-468-3066.

REPORT ISSUES TO THE MHCS D

We continue to need our residents' help with reporting issues to the MHCS D. Once an item has been reported through GoRequest one of our Staff Members will address the issue and update the status. You are then able to track the progress of the issue by signing in and looking at the issue you reported. You are also able to send us comments or suggestions. You can reach GoRequest from our website: <http://www.mountainhousecsd.org/resident-services/report-a-concern> or you can download the GoRequest app on your smartphone.

KEEP OUR COMMUNITY BEAUTIFUL

All the facilities in Mountain House under MHCS D control belong to you the residents. Please protect the landscaping, parks, streets and all other improvements as your own. If you see trash, take the time to pick it up. When MHCS D property is damaged or vandalized, it is your tax dollars that pays to fix or replace the damage! The CSD is funded by you and all money spent comes from you, the residents and rate payers of Mountain House. Please help us keep the community beautiful.