

Landscaping and Grounds

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Clark County School District



Landscaping and Grounds Mission Statement

Provide aesthetically pleasing environments for our students, staff, and public through teamwork and responsible landscape maintenance. To do this we perform routine, preventive, and renovation landscaping and grounds work focusing on safety, efficiency, and environmental conservation.



There's Got To Be A First

Welcome to our first Grounds newsletter. In this newsletter we hopefully will provide pertinent and useful information on upcoming events, life in the Grounds Section and new landscaping technology and procedures. With the inception of this newsletter, we'll distribute one every other month with the goal of one a month. This first print is being distributed in print but by the next edition you will be able to view this on our

new web site. Directions to this website will be distributed when we get an opportunity to include some pertinent information on the site.

As you should know, we recently received ISO 9001:2000 Certification. This certification reflects our commitment to Quality



Facilities Service Center

PRUNE, DON'T SHEAR

The air is crisper, the morning chillier, and the grass growth is slowing down which means we're closing on my favorite season, Fall. With the start of fall we slowly pull away from mowing weekly and can start campus cleaning which includes pruning shrubs

and trees. This summer I received a newsletter from Mountain States Nursery, a prominent desert plant grower for the southwest region, titled Desert Season. Usually, this newsletter highlights different and fun plant material but the July/ August edition discussed

proper maintenance procedures for drought tolerant plants. This article gets it so well that I have made it available to all CCSD gardeners and plan to use it in writing a pruning procedure for you, our gardeners. These aren't new ideas but sound practices that quality

Performance and Continual Improvement. Most of you participated in training of the CCSD Management Process System. Take a moment to reintroduce yourself to your Participants Guide. Those of you who are new hires will be identified and have the opportunity to also receive this valuable training. All of your comments at these trainings have shaped the direction of our continuous improvement path and we gladly thank you for them.

If you have ideas for future newsletters, please get them to us at the Facilities Service Center.

Thank you,

Alan

Welcome New Hires

09/08/06 -

Kirby Wilson

09/15/06 -

Dario Angelo (Legacy HS)

09/26/06 -

Colin Mohit (Western HS)

Promotions

Administrative Clerk –

Kim White

Gardener II –

Ontiwaun Carter

Selefuti Lemapu

Irrigation Systems Installer/Repairers –

Connie Avena

Robin Mathews

Marcos Rodriguez-Benitez

PRUNE, DON'T SHEAR (cont.)

Horticulturist follow. Below I've plagiarized key points from the article on how and why these practices should be followed.

THROW AWAY THE SHEARS!

Shearing water conserving plant produces vigorous new growth at the branch tips. This creates a 'shell' foliage and a hollow inside. The abundance of foliage is often greater than would normally occur on a plant left in its natural form. Plants with more leaf surface transpire larger amounts of water and therefore become less water efficient. Dr. Chris Martin, Urban Horticulturist with Arizona State University, indicates that frequent pruning weakens a plant by reducing the capacity to produce carbohydrates and to take up water and nutrients. He likens the practice to placing a plant on a crash diet. Many of the plants that we know and love produce flowers on the previous year's growth. Shearing destroys the natural flowering cycle. As a result we see minimal floral displays especially on Texas Sage and similar species.

Why do we continue to see this pruning style practiced. My theory is that man has an innate desire to manipulate his environment. From the park at Versailles to the Mickey Mouse topiaries at Disney World, manipulated plant material has become fashionable and accepted, or in some cases, expected. City planners, apparently desperate not to see the ground, place ridiculous requirements for plant coverage on developers and the designers use the guide of 3/4 of the full growth potential of the plant for spacing of their plants. This has led to overcrowding which means landscapers must constantly keep these plants 3/4 the size they want to get. This huge volume of pruning continually justifies the existence of maintenance companies who preach these practices.

The Desert Season newsletter discussed two alternative means of reducing plants without shearing. These are the

approaches I desire the gardeners at CCSD to use at our many facilities. First things first, NOT EVERY PLANT NEEDS TO BE PRUNED. With that said, I will discuss below: The Three-Year Pruning Method or the Two-Step Naturalistic Approach.

In the Three-Year Pruning Method remove one-third of the largest branches down to ground level each year. Of course the pruning should be done at the appropriate time of the year to allow for flowering and to remove the largest amount of messy fruit. Repeat this process the following year by removing one-third of the largest stems. By the end of the cycle, the shrub will have been completely rejuvenated with no wood remaining over three years old. The new foliage procured hides the previous cuts in each step of the process and the result is a very informal look.

The Two-Step Naturalistic Approach was introduced by the late Eric Johnson, famed designer and horticulturist of the Southwest, in his book, *Pruning, Planting, & Care*. He recommended pruning the outer canopy of the shrub to create a roughly rounded shape. Much like shearing, the size is reduced by perhaps one-third. Once completed, every other branch is then cut back to the first "V" crotch in the interior of the shrub. By varying the cuts randomly, the overall appearance is very natural looking. Both of the described methods may be used for Texas Rangers, Cassia, and similar species.

The last type of pruning I will discuss is Rejuvenation Pruning. This should only be done after discussions with the school and approval of the Landscape Supervisor or me. In this procedure, the shrub is reduced in size by pruning very hard, to near ground level. This should only happen to every other plant or select areas at one time. Many times in the past, an overgrown school gets 'naked' or all the plants cut down. This results in 'naked schools' and has upset many taxpayers who think we waste



'Lynn's Legacy' Leucophyllum
Great Flowering, unsheared, with a Cassia planted too close behind it.

money. When this is done, watch these plants and nip them here or there to train their shape. Rejuvenation pruning works well on just about every shrub except junipers and rosemary. If pruned at the outset of new growth the plant will bounce back rapidly. This method can be employed on shrubs that are damaged by cold or insects also. Many of our pruning practices on Texas Rangers or Bird of Paradise turn shrubs into 'vases' or stork looking trees. This practice invites sun scald, which invites infestation of wood boring beetles resulting in considerable limb die-back. By pruning hard every second or third year, the shrub produces vigorous new growth that is not favored by the insects.

Finally, I have two pet peeves. First, please don't prune the lower part of desert spoons up to a "V" shape. This forces the plants to vertically grow which looks awkward when they develop their trunk. Secondly, many schools have masses of deer grass. I recommend waiting until the end of two years then cutting them back to about 4-6" above the ground for regeneration the next year. This should be done in winter when the plant is dormant and please, don't ball these plants.

I hope this gives you some guidelines into how pruning is to be done at CCSD and by many of the better Horticulturist in the Southwest. If you have any questions, please call me at 799-1158. Also, share this with any of

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Tentative Training Days

Comprehensive Landscape Training Day – Week of Oct. 16.

Grounds Employee Appreciation Day – Oct. 20.

Comprehensive Sprinkler Training Day – Nov. 15 and/or 16.

Birthdays

October

08 John Singley
09 Kim White
16 Henry Gray
Howard Lee
23 Demora Asberry
24 Royse Kincherlow
26 Wayne Rogers
27 Bobby Daly
28 Mike Turner



November

04 Robert Rosas
05 Mario Rodriguez
06 Arthur Carrillo
07 Harry Schulty
08 Dario Angelo
Detrick Rayford
Derrick Triplett
23 Barbara Lane
25 Willie Banks
28 Alan Balk
30 Floyd Dominguez
William Leis, Jr.



KUDO'S

Look for East Region pictures taken at Rundle appearing in the October "NV Family" Publication. Good job, folks!

Check out the new front of Cheyenne HS courtesy of our New Construction and Renovation Team. I just got informed of their reluctance to be "in Rehab". Good job, folks!

Members of the "Focus Group" who have given us a mission statement and a lot of good ideas in our efforts for continual improvement. Good job, folks!

All of you Grounds Personnel who endured a very hot, long summer and got a lot of work done. Great job, folks!

Calendar of Events

October 2006

Oct. 11 — Pay Day
Oct. 25 — Pay Day
Oct. 27 — Nevada Day (No School)
Oct. 29 — Daylight Saving Time ends

November 2006

Nov. 8 — Pay Day
Nov. 10 — Veteran's Day (No School)
Nov. 22 — Pay Day
Nov. 23 — Thanksgiving Day (No School)
Nov. 24 — Family Day (No School)