

FOUR PEAKS MONTHLY

March 2009

Reliability Commitment Innovation Integrity

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New This Month

Get out and enjoy the outdoors. The annual wildflower displays have already begun throughout the desert. Lupine, poppy, desert marigold, penstemon and globe mallow are in full bloom now. Other desert plants blooming now include brittlebush, red yucca and fairy dusters.

March "To Do's"

Grass

- Ryegrass should be irrigated about three times a week depending upon the weather. Irrigate bermuda grass once weekly.
- If necessary, fertilize ryegrass with a balanced fertilizer. Avoid over-fertilization to prevent runaway growth.
- Plan on fertilizing non-overseeded bermuda grass areas with a balanced fertilizer towards the end of the month when new growth is showing.
- When soil temperatures are consistently above 60°, progressively reduce the mowing height of ryegrass by ¼ inch each week down to 1" in height to encourage spring transition.

Trees/Shrubs

- Complete winter cutbacks of shrubs to remove frost damage and to rejuvenate the plants. These cutbacks include lantana, sedges desert ruellia and bougainvilleas.
- Prune citrus mid month after they begin to leaf out with new spring growth.
- Begin planting new trees and shrubs. The sooner they are planted, the longer the plants will have to become established before the hot weather arrives.
- Finalize winter tree pruning now for sissou, elm and oak trees.
- Move emitters on trees out to the drip line of the trees to encourage root growth to help better support the trees during monsoon season.

Flowers

- Fertilize monthly to promote health and flowering using a high phosphorus fertilizer.
- Remove dead blooms to encourage continued flowering.

Monthly Manager's Feature

By: Bill Jernigan, East Valley Area Manager

Spring is Almost Here!!

Weather this winter has been wetter and warmer than we have seen in the recent past. Even though it feels like it, Spring won't officially arrive until March 20 this year. We are already seeing high temperatures routinely in the 80's and have even briefly reached the 90 degree mark. This is resulting in new growth emerging on plants and trees earlier than normal.

Visit your local nursery now for plants and trees to enhance your landscapes. The weather is ideal for planting both shrubs and trees. This will allow time for the plants to develop adequate root systems and become established before the heat of summer hit us. Make sure to keep the soil moist (don't overwater) around the roots to minimize planting stress to the new plants.

Not only is this weather great for plant growth, but is also setting up the ideal conditions for insect damage. Keep an eye out for aphids causing damage to new leaves as they like many of our desert plants including brittlebush and ash trees. A simple solution of dish soap and water applied to the upper and lower sides of the leaves will help control the damaging insects. For persistent or extensive infestation, your local nursery or home store can recommend an appropriate insecticide.

The winter rains were great for the landscape but they left us with a huge weed infestation in the granite areas. Control the weeds either manually or with the use of a herbicide. Check with your local home store for the best product for your situation.

What to Watch For Next Month

In April, plan on installing summer annuals to help establish them before the summer heat arrives. Also, given the current weather, plan on transitioning the overseeded Bermuda grass.

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