



## **MONTAGE NEWS – July 2011**

Well it looks like summer is here. After a mild spring we are seeing temperature over 100 now. While many of you are away at your summer homes, we want you to know that your Board and A & L Committee will still be here plugging away at making the community look and operate better.

At the July Board meeting we will be evaluating bids from new companies for:

- Perimeter and developer installed front yard landscape light maintenance
- Street sweeping
- Modifications to the detention basin overflow to reduce the level of standing water
- Painting the perimeter walls
- Placing boulders in the perimeter landscaping

At the May Board meeting we approved \$5,000 for installation of new palm trees to replace those that have died in the last few years. We are working toward beginning planting on the perimeter during the fall planting season (see article from the A & L Committee below).

### **Condolences**

To Board member Curt Beyer on the death of his mother on June 28, 2011.

## **PERIMETER REJUVENATION AND DATE PALM TREE REPLACEMENT UPDATE**

As all of you are very aware, our perimeter planting areas are undergoing some major changes.

We'd like to give you a little bit of history regarding the project. It is a common practice for builders to over plant a new community in order for it to appear lush and mature to the new residents and prospective buyers. Plants are not necessarily selected on the basis of drought tolerance and ease of maintenance. Such was the case here at Montage. Over the years, the overgrowth continued to the extent of some plants overcrowding and overtaking others. This also

provided a "blanket" for people to throw trash into the planter beds.

A couple of years ago, we began eliminating some of that overgrowth. About the same time, several agencies in the Valley (Coachella Valley Water District, Desert Water Company and others) began a campaign to conserve more water and initiated incentive programs to eliminate turf and non-water tolerant plants and replace them with desertscapes. Several of us have attended seminars regarding these conversions. Montage bought "Smart Controllers" to assist with governing our irrigation system. We have also converted many spray heads to drip emitters to conserve water.

Since we have limited funds that can be utilized for an extensive rejuvenation, the Board approved our conversion to be done in stages or phases. Otherwise, it would have been necessary to institute large increases in HOA dues or a hefty special assessment to every residence. We opted to try to work with a yearly budget to keep from financially burdening our homeowners, especially since the economy was in a serious decline.

We appreciate your concerns with the present appearance of the perimeter. While some of you are currently unhappy with its appearance, we have many residents who feel it looks much better with a lot of the overgrowth removed. We would love to be able to work faster in its completion, but we're going to make sure it's done correctly and still be within our budget constraints. We require that three or more proposals are submitted for the various stages of work. Remember that our Board meets every other month, so the process of selection and approval can require some time as well.

More recently we lost another date palm tree. We have lost five date palms since they were planted. Originally, we had 103 date palm trees on our perimeter and 8 date palms at the water detention basin. (111 total) In addition, we have 17 Mexican fan palms in each entry...34 total.

During an informative discussion about our date palms with the company who moved and planted all of them here at Montage, we learned that they are all within a **five or 6 year "end of life" stage**. So we can expect to incur some major expenses for removal of dead date palms over the next few years. We may lose several each year.

Ten foot tall date palms are \$3,500.00 each. Date palms grow an average of **5 to 6 inches per year**. That's a long time to wait for trees to form a canopy above the walls of this community!

However, a 25 foot Mexican fan palm, which is approximately ten years old, can be purchased for \$1,000.00 and would offer an instant canopy. Currently we have 17 Mexican fan palms in each entry. So blending in should not be a problem. These trees should live another fifty years. Remember, delivery, planting and other costs would add somewhat to the final price.

We feel this is a reasonable alternative solution for Montage's date palm tree problem and shows fiscal responsibility. Many other communities have installed fan palms as their tree of choice, like Vista Mirage across Gerald Ford and XXXX across Da Vall.

We hope this article has helped you to understand why we are slow in completing the rejuvenation process and our program for replacing date palm trees as they die.

Thanks for your understanding, patience and helping in maintain our community to a high standard.

Your A & L Committee

### **BABIES, BABIES BABIES!!!**

We're looking for babies! Would you be willing to give us your "babies"...**plants**, that is?

Please allow us to come to your property and "harvest" your young sprouts/offshoots from desert plants so that we can put them at curbsides or in the large planter beds.

It could save us a lot of money and help us to get parts of the perimeter replanted much faster. We have residents who are willing to do the work. We just need your donations.

Call Sandy at 760-320-3028 or Dotty at 760-202-9116 if you have donations

### **PALM TREE TRIMMING**

I'm sure by now, that you've noticed all of the perimeter date palms have been trimmed as well as the date palms at the water detention basin. We have 106 diamond cut date palm trees on our perimeter and at the water basin.

We hope to replace five date palms that have been lost over the past few years very soon.

Shortly after the trimming of the date palms, we had the 34 fan palms trimmed that line both entries.

### **Now it's your turn!!**

Please take a look at the palm trees you have in your yard and schedule a trim for them. Dead palm fronds are not very attractive and can provide hiding and nesting opportunities for unwanted rodents. So, please take a close look and get your trees trimmed.

By the way, fruit that is not harvested from any type of tree attracts critters as well. So let's all pay closer attention to tree trimming. This is the time of the year for palm tree trimming. September and October are the months you should trim deciduous trees, unless your trees need to be trimmed more often; especially a tree at the street that might interfere with the street sweeper. Or be in danger of blowing over during the strong fall winds.

Don't forget the palms in your backyard too. Your neighbors will appreciate having a better view and fewer droppings of blooms or fruit into their yard.

If you're thinking of adding or replacing palms, you may not know that fan palms and Washingtonians have roots that spread outward from the tree. Queen palms have roots that go straight down. Just a tip so that you don't end up with roots that are causing problems such as rising walks, patios or cracking walls.

Thanks for being good neighbors and maintaining your landscaping!!

A & L Committee

## **GARDENING CALENDAR FOR THE COACHELLA VALLEY**

From 'Lush & Efficient Landscape Gardening in the Coachella Valley' published by the Coachella Valley Water District . . .

### **JUNE**

Summer has arrived with a vengeance. It is important to maintain a regular irrigation schedule.

Prune to control rampant growth of oleanders, citrus, lantana, bougainvillea and hibiscus. Thin excess interior growth in mesquites. Remove crossing branches in Palo Verde trees.

Remove Bermuda grass that has invaded planting beds. Pull it by hand or spray with a product containing glyphosate. Take action as soon as you notice it; wait too long and it can become difficult to eradicate.

Roses, shrubs and young trees benefit from the addition of a 3-inch layer of mulch. It helps keep roots cool and slow evaporation of moisture from the soil.

Palms and cacti transplant most readily in hot weather. When moved early in the warm season, plants recover with good growth responding to beat and deep irrigations in well-drained soil.

Provide shade to protect sago palms from direct sun.

### **JULY**

With highs ranging from 105 degrees to 120 degrees F, it should be no surprise that gardening practically comes to a standstill this month. Any gardening task seems to become gigantic obstacle during a Coachella Valley summer. Early risers find ways to take care of necessary jobs despite the heat that is often accompanied by high humidity.

Weeds grow rapidly; regular control is important.

Trim off spent rose blooms that keep trying to flower despite the heat. Provide mulches to help plants survive high temperatures.

Monitor all irrigation systems closely. Failure now without early detection can be a disaster.

Be sure to water trees deeply. Palms, especially, respond to slow, deep irrigation. Soaker hoses are inexpensive and easy to use. Summer heat is also a good time to plant or transplant palms and cacti.

When chlorosis shows on eucalyptus and other trees, treat with soil acidifiers. Ask your nursery for advice on current products.

Indoors, with air conditioning, begin planning for the fall, or plan a retrofit to make the garden more water efficient and there's home. After July, it is only two months until the fall planting season and the onset of cooler temperatures!

### **AUGUST**

August is a near repeat of July, only high temperatures seem to extend longer and higher humidity plays more of a role. Rains may or may not appear.

Remove dead basal foliage of perennials. Deadhead (trim or pinch off) spent flowers of coreopsis and rudbeckia.

Trim away dead flowering stems of Salvia Greggii, autumn sage. This stimulates creation of new flowering stems for the fall and winter season. Likewise, lightly cut back old, tired stems of Salvia Farinacca, Blue Salvia, to encourage new basal growth.

Time to make plans for fall planting of annuals and perennials. Order seeds of adapted wildflowers for planting in September and October. If weather is not too hot, prepare fall planting beds by digging organic materials into the top 8 to 10 inches of soil.

Rebuild basins on plants, especially on slopes, to hold in irrigation water. Check drip irrigation systems to see that they are operating correctly.

Continue to control unwanted Bermuda grass. If over-seeding your Bermuda grass lawn, hold off on fertilizing – renovation and reseedling is just two months ahead. If not over-seeding, then fertilize.

Green algae on the soil surface in the garden indicates excessive moisture. Check irrigation lines and hose bibs for leaks.

Hold off extensive shearing or pruning for another month. Pruning now may expose formerly shaded stems and foliage to sunburn.

### **COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE LIGHTS**

The next inspection of the perimeter and developer installed front yard landscape lights will be about July 6th. The inspection will normally be the first Wednesday of every month (some months differ due to weather or other conditions). If you notice a light out, notify Jennifer, she will inform the light maintenance company to look for that light in their next inspection.

### **STREET SWEEPING**

Our streets are swept on Thursdays. Please make sure all cars, including service workers, are off the street. Also, be sure that trees are trimmed and don't interfere with the street sweeper.

### **DOGS**

Dog walkers need to keep to the streets. Anyone caught letting their dog urinate or "do their business" on another homeowners property will be assessed a \$100 fine. There are no common areas within the Montage gates, except the retention basin. The areas along the walls by the mailboxes are private property, maintained by the adjacent homeowner. Please respect homeowner's property and keep your dog on the street area only.

We recognize that a majority of our homeowners not only follow the rules but work to remind others of our standards for mutual property respect and appearance. One can often see the dog walkers picking up occasional trash and etc. found in the area or thrown out by inconsiderate motorists.

### **NEXT BOARD MEETING**

The next Board meeting will be Thursday, July 14, 2011 at 3:00 PM at the offices of Personalized Property Management, 69850 Adelina Road, Cathedral City.

Check the community message board on the wall by the retention basin or the web site for the agenda. It will be posted at least 4 days before the meeting.

**Tom Tousignant, President**

### **IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

Keep This Information Handy When You Would Like to Comment or Report an Issue:

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