

The *Marbrisa Ranch*
Newsletter
2nd Qtr, 2008



2007-2008 Board of Directors

**Paul Mason
Bill Wilkinson
Al Stockman
Bob Fulton
Loretta Rollins**

WATER CONSERVATION

Take a moment and review the following recommendations from the City of Glendale - Water Conservation Program Manager, Jo Miller. This information is very informative to the Association & Homeowners alike.



WEB SITE:

Please visit the Marbrisa Ranch web site at:
www.MarbrisaRanchHOA.com
for the most recent information on your Association!

A NEW LOOK FOR THE ASSOCIATION

New pruning of plant life within the common areas will commence with this pruning season. While the initial look may raise some eye brows the overall effect in the long run will bring new curb appeal to the community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The Board will be holding the next Board of Directors Meeting on March 11th, 2008 at: The Glendale Christian Church located on the corner of Mountain View and 59th Ave. at 7:00 PM.

We're looking forward to seeing you there!

Offsetting Landscape Costs

In the last year water rates for the city of Glendale have increased and have impacted landscape budgets for many homeowner associations. The city of Glendale Water Conservation Office offers free services to homeowner associations (HOAs) to assist them in becoming better water managers and in reducing landscape costs while maintaining and even improving landscape appearance and health.

Landscape Watering Recommendations

Provided by: City of Glendale

The Board for the Marbrisa HOA began working last fall with the Water Conservation Office to determine monthly recommended water use amounts specific to the Marbrisa common area landscapes. The recommended usage is determined by calculating the turf square footage and the square footage and plant coverage of the desert areas. The totals are plugged into a spreadsheet calculator for the Valley plant and turf types. The historic weather conditions for each month are factored in to provide a monthly break down of water needed to maintain plant health. The recommended monthly and annual water use tables were presented to the Board this winter. Staying within the recommended monthly water use amounts could reduce water use by 20% or more.

After discussing the recommended water usage tables provided by the city's Water Conservation Office, the Marbrisa Board agreed to begin closely tracking the landscape water use to assist the landscape contractor with making real time scheduling adjustments to keep water use within the targeted amounts. The property management company will provide the monthly updates on water used.

Over Pruned Plants

Several board members, the landscape contractor, and city water conservation staff toured the landscape common areas on two separate occasions to evaluate the health and condition of the landscape plants and turf. A letter outlining options for conserving water and improving plant health was presented to the Board at the January meeting by Jo Miller from the city's Water Conservation Office. Ms. Miller also provided information on the costs of over-pruning plants in the landscape (see the article *The Cost of Over-Pruning Shrubs*) in this newsletter). The Board has agreed to work with the landscape contractor to establish new priorities in the landscape contract. More time will be allocated to needed irrigation monitoring, adjustments, and repairs. The plants will be maintained with a more natural appearance reducing the need for constant, expensive shearing and trash hauling. Some of the shrubs will need to be replaced due to age and partial die back from years of over pruning. Early this Spring there will be a transitional period in the pruning and the care of the shrubs. Renewal and selective pruning will begin to encourage more natural shrub growth. The initial renewal pruning may require a severe cut back of many of the shrubs to encourage new growth. The goal is to continue selective pruning once or twice a year to encourage blooming, reduce water use, and promote plant health.

The Cost of

Over Pruning Plants

Loss of Bloom:

Many shrubs are regularly sheared and shaped into round teardrops and squares because it is believed to bring out the best appearance or to be the ideal of a well cared for landscape. Unfortunately, over-pruned landscapes are so prevalent that it has become the “norm” in many homeowner association (HOA) landscape contracts. In reality regular shearing can severely limit blooming and eliminate the landscape “color” that was originally intended in the landscape design.

Plant Decline

A recent ASU study confirms that plants that are regularly trimmed or sheared require more water to repair the wounds that trimming creates. Regular pruning (which means more than once or twice a year) also decreases the plant foliage that shades and protects plants from our intense summer heat. The result is gradual die back on shrubs and trunk sun burning and decline on trees. In other words the more you trim a plant the more you shorten its life span.

Over Watering:

Often the response to plants in decline (partial die back from regular shearing) is to water them more. Since the plant may already have partial die back, more water usually stimulates uneven and unattractive growth patterns which prompts additional shearing. A cycle of over-watering and over-pruning is perpetuated.

Higher Maintenance Costs:

Besides the costs for extra water and for plant replacement, over pruning can be a significant expense in a landscape contract. It is labor intensive and time consuming for the landscape contractor. Shearing, clean-up of the trimmings, and trash hauling of trimmings is often the biggest expense in a landscape contract for an HOA.

What to Do?

The Board Members for the Marbrisa HOA are taking a good look at the landscape contract by reallocating priorities to become better water managers and reduce excessive and expensive pruning. The goal is to have a colorful and more attractive landscape while offsetting the additional increases in water rates (see the article *Offsetting Landscape Costs* in this newsletter).

If you would like more information on when to prune shrubs and trees, contact the Glendale Water Conservation Office at 623 930-3596 and ask for the *When to Prune Landscape Guide*.

Submitted by:

Jo Miller

Water Conservation Program Manager

City of Glendale

AS ALWAYS

Questions? Concerns?
Comments?

Please contact your Property Manager,
Betsy Retchin or her assistant Suzanne, at:

R & R Property Management

4742 N. 24th St., Ste. 325

Phoenix, AZ 85016

(602) 954-9252

(602) 954-8805 (fax)

betsyretchin@rrpropertymanagement.com

suzanne@rrpropertymanagment.com