

the Grassette

TERRE VISTA LLC

Merry Christmas



I cannot believe that Christmas is once again upon us it seems that just yesterday it was 105 and sticky. Today as I am looking out my window I can see a few snow flurries, burr. Another thing that I can't believe is the price a fuel, today I filled my tank at \$1.59 per gallon just a few weeks ago it was \$3.50 per gallon, as many of you will notice I have dropped the fuel surcharge from this month's bill, Merry Christmas.

I also wanted to take the time to thank each of you for your businesses over the past several years; most of you have been customers 10+ years and for that you have my utmost thanks a few of you have been with me for the entire ride, some of you this is your first season and I just want all of to know how much I and my family appreciate all of you. That being said because of your loyalty (last year we retained 99% of our customers) there will be no price increase for 2009. We are in line for a slight increase; it has been about three years since the last one. Because of the way the economy is right now I have decided to tighten my belt and reward our customers for your past business and your future business.

DECEMBER 2008

Once again this Thanksgiving we were opining of holidays past and since this was Kolby's first Thanksgiving away from home, he was in Kentucky with his basketball team that he manages for his school. I thought it best to pick on him. I cannot remember if it was our second or third Christmas with Kolby, but it really does not matter except to put things in prospective. Anyway, I was taking him shopping to help me pick out something for his mother for Christmas. We went to Henry's in Towne East, although at the time I had no business going there as were extremely poor and I probably would have been better served to go to Wal-Mart. As I was browsing a very attractive sales girl came to help me, ala, like Chevy Chase's character in the movie "Christmas Vacation." She brought several things over to me and kept enquiring to about my budget which I was too embarrassed to tell her. During all this Kolby was squirming around so I put him down and told him to stay close by. After several modeling sessions I finally had it narrowed to two sweaters. One was \$50.00 and the other was \$40.00 so I felt that I was doing well for staying under \$100.00. I could not decide between them and so since I was under my \$100 target I decided to get both. The salesgirl said, "that will be \$140.00." I was pretty good with math and so I enquired

VOL. XVI ISSUE X

about the price' the one that I thought was \$40 was really \$90 again since I was young and at the time I did not want to embarrass myself further, so I just paid the bill and I reached down to take Kolby's hand. I reached down and only found a handful of air. I started looking around and he was nowhere to be found; now I really started to panic, here I was a relatively new father and I had lost my first-born, what was my wife going to say, maybe the sweaters would make her forget. I started racing over the layout of the store frantically looking for him. I got down on my hands and knees and was looking under the clothes racks hoping I would catch his feet. The salesgirl was also in a panic and she immediately got on the phone to call store security and begin the process of locking down the store. About that time the security guard was coming towards me and on my way over to him I heard this little snicker. I walked in the direction I thought I heard the noise as I got closer to the noise I peered over the circular rack of clothes and there was his blonde hair and his blue eyes just staring up at me. He had drawn his legs up so when I got on my knees I could not see him. He began to laugh and I never felt so relieved my entire life I just snatched him up and gave him the biggest bear hug, I was mad but I did not care because my son was lost but now he was found.



Turf's Up

We have applied the fourth and final round of fertilizer this season. Water is not at all necessary with this application as I like to wait there until nature takes its course. This application is important as it helps the root system get ready for a long winter's nap and it is important for greening up your lawn come next spring.

Right now we are in the midst of fall clean-ups which we started the last week of November and they should carry through to Christmas. (weather permitting) We have over 60 names on that list so it will take us a while to get through it, some days we can only get about 5-6 lawns completed it always varies as to the amount of leaves. So please be patient and we will get to you as soon as possible. We have almost finished the west side except for a few properties with some stubborn oaks to which the leaves just will not fall and we are well into the eastside schedule. We will see you soon.

Choosing and Caring for Your Christmas Tree

If selecting a cut tree, watch for these signs that the tree is too far gone.- Needles are a dull, grayish-green color- Needles fail to ooze pitch when broken apart and squeezed- Needles feel stiff and brittle - Needles pull off tree easily Once you have your tree home, recut the trunk about one inch above the original cut. This will open up clogged, water-conducting tissues. Immediately place the trunk in warm water. Locate the tree in as cool a spot as possible. Avoid areas near fireplaces, wood-burning stoves, heat ducts and television sets as the heat will result in excess water loss. Make sure the reservoir stays filled. If the reservoir loses enough water that the bottom of the trunk is exposed, the trunk will need to be recut. Adding aspirins, copper pennies, soda pop, sugar and bleach to the water



reservoir have not been shown to prolong the life of a tree. If you choose a living Christmas tree, be sure to dig the planting hole before the ground freezes. Mulch the hole and backfill soil to keep them from freezing. Live trees should not be kept inside for more than three days. Longer periods may cause them to lose dormancy resulting in severe injury when planted outside. You may wish to tag the tree at the nursery and then pick it up a couple days before Christmas. After Christmas, move the tree to an unheated garage for several days to acclimatize it to outside temperatures. After planting, water well and leave some mulch in place to prevent the soil water from freezing and becoming unavailable for plant uptake.

Poinsettia Care

Modern poinsettia varieties stay attractive for a long time if given proper care. Place your poinsettia in a sunny window or the brightest area of the room, but don't let it touch cold windowpanes. The day temperature should be 65 to 75 degrees F. with 60 to 65 degrees at night. Temperatures above 75 degrees will shorten bloom life, and below 60 degrees may cause root rot. Move plants away from windows at night or draw drapes between them to avoid damage from the cold. Poinsettias are somewhat finicky in regard to soil moisture. Avoid overwatering because poinsettias do not like "wet feet." On the other hand, if the plant is allowed to wilt, it will drop some leaves. So how do you maintain proper moisture? Examine the potting soil daily by sticking your finger about one inch deep into the soil. If it is dry to this depth, the plant needs water. When it becomes dry to the touch, water the plant with lukewarm water until some water runs out of the drainage hole, then discard the drainage water.





December To Do's

1. Pick out poinsettia and Christmas cactus early.
2. Check your bird feeders.
3. Keep Christmas tree watered.
4. Cut back hardy mums to 3" and mulch well.
5. Mulch roses after ground has frozen.
6. Thoroughly water lawn, trees & shrubs before putting away hoses.
7. Do not water if ground is frozen.
8. Decide on the changes you need to make in your garden and start to plan them on paper.

Yams vs Sweet Potatoes, What's the Difference?

This past Thanksgiving the big debate at our table was is a sweet potato and a yam the same thing or are they entirely different vegetable. I think that that they are the same thing it just depends on what part of the country you are from and since I am from the south I call them sweet potatoes. My mother on the other hand is from California and she insists that they are completely different but what does she know? I found this article the other day on the County website so I will let K-State decide.

There is a great deal of confusion over the difference between yams and sweet potatoes This confusion has led, at times, to uncertainties regarding the preparation and use of this nutritious vegetable.

Simply stated, yams and sweet potatoes, those which you typically find in local grocery stores, come from the same plant, but are represented

by different cultivars. The only major difference between the two is in their baking characteristics. Yams are sweet potatoes that have a moister flesh when cooked. Although sweet potatoes are slightly drier when prepared, both yams and sweet potatoes have the same nutritional value and can be used interchangeably.

Depending upon where you reside in the United States, you might call a sweet potato a yam, or vice versa. Botanists keep things from getting out of hand by using scientific names when referring to plants, not their common name. The scientific name sweet potato (yam) is *Ipomoea batata*. It is a member of the morning glory family.

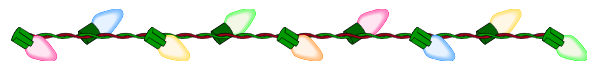
The name, yam, is incorrectly applied to the sweet potato. The "true" yam is a perennial, tropical vining plant in the genus, *Dioscorea*. Several species within this genus produce roots that are used as human food. Some species are a medicinal source of steroidal sapogenins. Although prepared for food by baking and boiling, true yams and sweet potatoes are not botanically related.

After reading the article I think we are both right and at the same time we are both wrong. I guess the great "yam debate" lives another season.

Frost on Lawns

This is a question that I get all the time this time of the year. If you have ever walked across a frosted lawn that isn't dormant, you may have noticed your footprints showing up later in the day. Though this is unsightly, it **does not** kill the turf. Grass blades are damaged but the crown is not. Actively growing turf

will often recover after two to four mowings. Damage that occurs late in the fall will continue to show damage until it is masked by the rest of the lawn turning brown due to cold weather. It is believed that the damage is caused by ice crystals killing plant cells when they are forced into the leaf by the weight of a wheel or foot. Remember to avoid damage by staying off of frosted turf. Also, even damaged turf is not killed and will eventually recover.



Christmas Recipes



In our hustle bustle lives here are a few of my wife's favorite on the go Christmas ideas. Every year we load these goodies into cellophane bags tie them up with ribbon and give them away to friends. The are all very easy recipes and they are all crowd pleasers.

Crock Pot Candy

2 lbs. white almond bark; 1 bar (4oz. German chocolate); 1 pkg. (12 oz) semisweet chocolate chips; 1 jar (24oz) dry roasted peanuts.

Place all ingredients in a crock-pot on high: cook 1 hour on high. Do not stir. Turn crock-pot to low and stir every 15 minutes for 1 hour. Drop on waxed paper and cool. Store in an airtight container.

Rolo Pretzels

Favorite pretzel shape; 1 pkg. Rolo candies (round candies filled with caramel made by Hershey); 1 pkg. pecan halves

Set oven for 250 degrees. Lay out pretzels on a large cookie sheet with aluminum foil between cookie sheet and pretzels. Place 1 candy in the middle of each pretzel and bake for approximately 4 minutes. While they are still warm place pecan halve on each candy and press down.

Saltine Cracker Toffee

Line lipped cookie sheet w/ saltine crackers. Boil 1 cup butter with 1cup brown sugar for 3 minutes. Pour over saltines and spread evenly. Bake for 5 minutes at 400 degrees. After the 5 minutes have passed take out of oven and immediately pour 2 cups chocolate chips on top. Wait about five minutes and then use a knife and spread the melted chocolate evenly.

These recipes are fool proof, really. The last time I made this statement concerning a recipe one of my customers almost blew up their microwave when they followed one of my "fool proof" recipes. I later found out the wattages of microwaves makes a huge difference.

Did You Know...?

That here in Wichita our wettest month is June. (4.5 inches)

That we only average 10 days over 100 degrees in the summer.

Our average summer high is 92 degrees.

We average over 300 days of sunshine. (take that Florida)

A mature tree will release up to 25 gallons of water per day into the atmosphere.

An average 7,000 sq. ft. lawn will produce enough oxygen for 15 people per day.

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take; but by the moments that take our breath away.



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Have a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2009