

How to Report Violations

IN ORDER to report a code violation in the unincorporated areas of the county, please call the Gwinnett County Department of Planning and Development's 24-hour hotline at 678.518.6032 or go to the website at: < <http://www.co.gwinnett.ga.us>> to report a code violation online. Anonymous complaints may be made. It is not necessary to personally speak to a code compliance officer to report a violation. Violations may range from storing junk vehicles on private property to operating a business, such as automobile repair, in a residential area.

To promote the safety and continued value of neighborhood property, the Apalachee Plantation Home Owners Association most frequently reports violations regarding tall weeds/grass, cars parked in yards, and commercial vehicles.

Violations of the Gwinnett County Zoning Resolution, Sign Ordinance, and Property Maintenance Ordinance are prosecuted in the Environmental Division of Recorder's Court and are subject to a penalty of up to \$1000 and/or 60 days in jail per violation per day.

To request updates or information about previously submitted violations, please call 678.518.6050 or send an email to the Code Compliance general email box at pndce@gwinnettcounty.com.

Be vigilant to protect the value of your home and neighborhood.

Take Pride in Your Home and Your Neighborhood

Apalachee Plantation is one of the few remaining affordable neighborhoods in our area. Don't let it turn into an eyesore and a slum. Protect your investment. Maintain your home and your yard. Encourage your neighbors to do the same. Report code violations to the county. Remember, no one has the right to ignore County requirements and restrictions, nor do they have the right to violate Association covenants. See the article on this page "How to Report Violations."

Landlords: Legislation is pending that will allow the State and County to more easily verify and enforce code violations. Act now before you are fined.

Thinking of Renting Out Your Home?

WHEN moving to a bigger home, many home owners consider renting out their old home as an investment. Here are a few points to consider.

You, as the owner, are responsible for repairs to keep the property in good condition. By Georgia law, landlords cannot require tenants to make or pay for repairs, unless that tenant or the tenant's family or guests caused the damage.

In our neighborhood, the HOA can take action against homes not properly maintained, and for owners not paying association dues. This includes putting a lien against your property to cover money owed for association dues, and the hiring of contractors to mow untended lawns, or reporting violations to the County. Our HOA is also vigilant to report county and municipal code violations.

When your tenants request repairs in writing, if you do not make the requested repairs within a reasonable amount of time, your tenant is allowed, by law, to sue for damages.

While Georgia law does not guarantee the following, tenants may also make the repairs themselves, or hire someone else to do them. They may then subtract the cost of the repairs from the next month's rent. Any renter planning such an action should first consult an attorney.

Before renting out your home, drive around our neighborhood. While there are rental homes that have been well cared for, there are a few that show tell-tail signs of renter occupancy. It is sad that some persons demonstrate little concern for the property of others and destroy blinds, carpeting, walls, and light fixtures, and neglect the lawn and garden. Is that what you want to happen to your property? Consider the cost of replacing or repairing such items. Your investment may become nothing more than a liability.

We appreciate the many residents in our neighborhood that take pride in the appearance of their home, whether rented or owned.

page 4

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APALACHEE PLANTATION HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 922

Dacula, GA 30019

March 2007

Apalachee Plantation Homeowners' Association Newsletter

Small and Fantastic: Five Native Ornamental Trees for Your Front Yard

WHEN it comes to major landscape features like trees, our own natives are rarely offered or even considered. Yet, they have unique characteristics that make them highly desirable in our Southern gardens. In this article, I will present five different species, each from a different genus, that I highly recommend. While these trees may not be available at your local home and garden center in Georgia, don't discount them, keep looking.

American Smoketree (*Cotinus obovatus*), my personal favorite, is a fast growing species that can reach 40' high x 25' wide. Large blue green, oval foliage turns a brilliant orange and gold in the fall. Its pale bark is attractively smooth. In spring, the American Smoketree lives up to its name as flowers like wine-colored

puffs of smoke appear. This is the only species in this genus occurring in North America.

Because it is *continued on page 2*



Cedar Waxwings love our neighborhood and flock to native fruiting trees

Late Winter Lawn Tips

WINTER is the time of year when your lawn is ideal. With Bermuda sod dormant, homeowners get a much-deserved break. However, there are a few things to do to prepare now for a beautiful lawn in spring.

Apply pre-emergent to your sod lawns at least twice during the winter months. This helps control or prevent pest weeds early before the roots become active and established. Allow a few weeks between applications, and apply during periods of moderate rainfall.

Another practice for bermuda lawns is to cut them to a lower height. This is called scalping and is done as spring nears to remove dormant grass and to allow new growth to occur. Set your mower's height lower than normal, but not so low as to stall out the mower. More than one cutting may be necessary to attain an ideal height. You can put the clippings in your compost pile, or mulched into the lawn if you are using a recycler mower. They will actually benefit the lawn, just avoid clumps or trails of the clippings.

While edging gives a neat appearance to your home, don't use an edger along sidewalks and *continued on page 2*

Burning Leaves, or anything else in your yard is illegal. Fires may be lit in gas, electric, or charcoal grills.

Annual Home Owners' Meeting April 10, 7 p.m.

We will again meet this year in the cafeteria of Fort Daniel Elementary School.

Put Winter's Leaves to Good Use

ARE YOU wondering how to get rid of the mountain of leaves in your backyard? Some waste disposal services also offer yard waste pick-up for an additional fee. But, why not save money and improve your garden bed at the same time? Using a bagging lawn mower, chop your leaves to about the size of a 50 cent piece. Spread them under a tree. You can then regularly sprinkle them with a compost activator, and keep them consistently moist. But, the easy way is just to cover them with other mulching material and let them decompose on their own. You will be returning valuable nutrients to the soil without having to pay for it.

Spring Clean-up Day March 31

We will meet 8 a.m. at the front of the subdivision. Bring your gardening and cleanup tools. We will be cleaning up the area behind the chain-link fence along our entrance road.

Contents

Board Members and Contact Info	2
Fall Lawn and Garden Tips	3
Monthly Garden Advice	3
How to Report Code Violations	4
Take Pride in Your Neighborhood	4
Thinking of Renting Out Your Home?	4

Clean Chimneys to Prevent Fires

NOTHING beats a wood fire for adding warmth and beauty to our homes during winter chill. Wood also causes a dangerous buildup of highly flammable creosote along the sides of the chimney. An annual cleaning will help protect your home, family, and neighbors from a devastating fire.

Chimney fires do not occur in clean chimneys. But, when creosote builds up on your chimney walls to as little as 1/4 inch, you have a fire hazard in your home. Burning creosote inhibiting logs, or using other maintenance products does provide some protection, but is not enough on its own. Your best protection is to keep your chimney clean. Here are a few tips and reminders from the Georgia Chimney Sweep Guild, www.gachimneys.org.

page 1

Five, Fantastic, Small Trees, from page 1

almost never seen in the trade or offered to the public, planting one will give your home a unique beauty. It grows quickly, up to 4' per year, and needs to be planted in a xeric site (dry) in full sun. This is the ultimate low-maintenance tree. Do not fertilize or give extra water for this will cause abnormal and unattractive growth habit. All it needs is an annual application of lime since its natural habitat is very dry rock outcrops of neutral composition where it develops into a strong, upright, small tree.

Chalkbark Maple (*Acer leucoderme*) is my second favorite tree, and it also is almost never offered to the public through the trade. The Chalkbark Maple is the smallest species of maple native to the north Georgia area. It rarely grows beyond 25' high x 25' wide.

In spring and summer the leaves are the typical maple shape, just a bit smaller than average. But watch the show in the fall as this chameleon far outshines the best Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*). Rivaling the Northern Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) for fall color, Chalkbark maples can have green, lime green, yellow, peach, orange, cherry and flaming red leaves, all at the same time. Your yard will have an explosion of color unlike any you or your neighbors have ever seen.

Up until some 20 to 30 years ago, Gwinnett County supported the largest population of this spectacular tree. Now it holds on only in green belts and spaces, mostly along river and creek corridors. It is a moderate grower with an average rate of 1' per year. This typically multi-trunked tree gets its name from the flat, pale lichen that grow in patches on the smooth, light gray bark. This is one maple that should not be overlooked for it has all the charm you could desire in a small landscape tree, and is a host plant for the Cecropia Moth, Luna Moth, and Polyphemus Moth.

American Olive (*Osmanthus Americana*) is related to the all too familiar Oriental Fragrant Tea Olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*). Devilwood, another common name for the species, is the only native-American in the genus. Being a small, evergreen, multi-trunked tree that can reach 20-30' high by 20' wide, it makes a great addition to the landscape.

The foliage of this species is simple elliptical (untoothed oval), glossy dark green, and is approximately 3-4 inches long. The flowers are a creamy white, very similar to the more familiar Tea Olive, and are fragrant as well, but not to the same degree.

American Olive is very tolerant of a wide range of conditions, from moist to dry sites and performs well in shade or full sun. It is a dioecious species, meaning that they are single-sexed plants. Each plant has either male or female flowers. Females produce round blackish fruits that average 1/4 inch in diameter. The American Olive is a wonderful alternative in situations where you are looking for a medium-tall, broad-leaf evergreen.

Ben Franklin Tree (*Franklinia alatamaha*) has a very interesting history. Father and son explorers John and William Bartram discovered a small grove of this stunning species along the Altamaha River in South Georgia in 1765 and named it in honor of their good friend, Benjamin Franklin. On a later trip William collected seed, which he planted in his Philadelphia garden. Sadly, the tree was never seen again in the wild after 1803. But, thanks to William Bartram, we can still enjoy this species today. He single-handedly saved it from extinction.

Frankliniana is a small, beautiful tree. In spring it is covered with snow-white flowers, similar to the flowers of a simple Camellia. Narrow lance-shaped leaves are dark green and turn rich shades of orange, red, and purple in the fall. Considered a challenge to grow, it seems to prefer organic soils that drain well. Shady sites in the Deep South and more sun in the North appear to suit it best.

Red bay Tree (*Persea borbonia*) is a coastal species but, will grow here, and has performed well for us in Fayette County. It can reach 15' high by 10' wide in our area, where the winter cold restricts its size. On the coast it gets somewhat larger. This species can develop into a dense, small tree that can be used in barrier and privacy plantings.

Simple, dark green, glossy, elliptical foliage adorns the Red Bay. The leaves were used by the native people to season foods, just as the Mediterranean Bay leaf has been used abroad. The fragrance of the crushed leaf is similar to the commercial Bay leaf, just not as potent.

The Red Bay can grow in a wide range of conditions from moist to dry sites. Planting it in full sun on the south side of your home or forest is best. Charming flowers are followed by round, dark purple fruits in late summer. *Persea borbonia* is a host plant for the Palamedes Swallowtail and secondary host for the Spicebush Swallowtail butterflies.

You can't go wrong planting any one of these delightful Georgia natives as an orna-

mental in your yard. They are easy to care for, beautiful, and belong here.

Thanks you for allowing me to share my knowledge of wonderful Native Plants.

Jim Rodgers

*Jim and Debi Rodgers own Nearly Native Nursery in Fayetteville, Georgia..
www.nearlynativenursery.com*

Lawn Care, from page 1

driveways during winter and early spring. Edging at this time removes dirt and allows pest weeds to establish themselves. As unsightly as it may appear it will eliminate time and expense to wait a few more weeks.

Prune trees and shrubs to control overgrowth. Colder temperatures will greatly reduce the stress of pruning, especially if drastic cuts are needed. Crape Myrtles should be cut back severely between mid-January and early February. Limbs should be cut above the main fork of the tree trunk. Remember to cut limbs at an angle and in a manner that will allow new growth to expand outwards. If limbs are cut at an angle inwards new growth will rub and impede other limb development.

It is not too late to plant trees and shrubs. Again colder temperatures and increased rainfall amounts will help reduce stress. It is a good idea to provide an adequate layer of mulch also.

Enjoy these winter slower months. A little prep now will provide great results later.

Tips provided by Jamie Burns, owner of Reliable Lawn Care, specialists in low maintenance and native gardening. 770-596-3042. Call for a free estimate.

Board Members and Contact Information

President: Lee Adkins
Vice President: George Olavarria
Secretary: Vacant
Treasurer: Madeline Andrade
Member-at-large: Ren Burnette
E-mail: Contact Any HOA Board Member at: apalacheeplantation@yahoo.com
Mailing address: PO Box 923; Dacula, GA 30019
Website: www.apalacheeplantation.com
Lee Adkins can be reached at: 404-432-6878

Monthly Gardening Advice from Pike's

March

- When weather begins to warm, reseed your Fescue lawn or just plant seed in the bare spots.
 - Prune Camellias after blooming is complete, then feed them with Nursery and Landscape Fertilizer or Azalea Camellia Food.
 - Thin and transplant fall-sown annuals and biennials such as larkspur, poppies, and Lunaria. Feed with a light application of balanced fertilizer.
 - Divide perennials as needed before new growth advances too much.
 - Fertilize houseplants and repot if needed.
 - If you haven't already done so, prune Roses. Prune 1/3 of the canes on climbers, prune hybrid teas to 18", then fertilize with Pennington Rose Food.
 - Cut back Butterfly Bushes to 1/3 the size you want them to become this summer.
 - Check Gardenias for Whiteflies. Use Insecticidal Soap to control.
 - Use insecticide such as Cygon to control Lacebugs.
 - Fertilize spring bulbs with one pound bulb food per 100 sq. ft. of bed.
 - Buy summer bulbs like Gladiola, Cannas, Iris, Dahlias and Lilies. Wait until April to plant.
 - Spray Poison Ivy and Kudzu vines with Roundup when the new leaves appear.
 - Begin to prepare soil for the summer garden. Be careful not to work the soil if it's too wet.
 - In early March, apply a pre-emergent herbicide to established lawns to help control summer weeds.
 - Fertilize fescue lawns.
- April*
- Still time to plant annuals for spring and summer enjoyment!
 - Plant tropical vines at your mailboxes for bright flowers all summer. Good choices include Mandevilla, Bougainvillea and Allamanda.
 - Pinch back annuals to encourage bushy compact growth. Annuals appreciate a continual supply of nutrients. Begin to fertilize them moderately on a regular basis.
 - Great time to plant long-blooming perennials like Daylilies, Purple Coneflowers,

Shasta Daisies and Gaura. and summer bulbs like Cannas, Iris, Dahlias and Lilies.

- Be sure to mulch all garden beds well to help regulate soil temperature, retain moisture, and keep weeds down.
- Use weed killer on lawns only if temperature is above 70 degrees F.
- Fertilize roses in May to encourage a sec-

ond bloom, and continue feeding them on schedule through the month of June.

- Fertilize flower beds.
- Fertilize azaleas as soon as they finish blooming.

For further information: http://county.gwinnett.edu/gwinnett/AG/garden_cal.htm; <http://www.pikenursery.com>

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Ads
Ads can be placed for \$15 per year for homeowners and \$25 per year for non-homeowners.
Contact the HOA

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Let us plan your event!



Donette Hatcher
Email: hatcher catering@yahoo.com
www.hatcher catering.com
770.356.5060

We do Birthday's, Wedding's, Bar Mitzvahs, Super Bowl Parties, Office Parties, etc.