

Spring Newsletter

Newsletter Date 4/14/17

The Retreat at Greenbrier

Special points of interest:

- Winter Rye/Bermuda
- Pest Control
- Irrigation Start-Up
- Mulch, Erosion, Spring plant replacements

Winter Rye Grass/Bermuda grass transition

This fall, we seeded the entire community with winter Rye grass instead of the traditional Tall Fescue, allowing for a quicker transition to Bermuda. The rye is starting to fade out in many areas allowing for the Bermuda to fill in once it starts growing. Bermuda has established in a lot of areas throughout the community and is thriving with the hot dry summers we have been having the past few years. Bermuda is better adapted to our climate than Tall Fescue and for the poor sandy soils that are prominent throughout The Retreat. Bermuda requires less water which reduces the stress on the irrigation system during the hottest parts of the summer. The community will be seeded with an improved variety Of Bermuda grass in mid-May called Sun sport Bermuda. This seed is a coated, seed which provides protection to the seed and nutrients to help get the seed established. Bermuda is traditionally slow to establish from seed, however with this variety we have had very good success establishing Bermuda in one growing season. I stress however, that this is a transition and the change takes time. This year will be a little rough with turf quality due to the transition process. We want to let all the residents know because of the transition, weed control in the turf will be reduced during the establishment period. Because of the late spring seeding, crab grass pre-emergents will not be able to be utilized in the areas we are transitioning to Bermuda. Pre-emergent will prevent the Bermuda seed from germinating. The Bermuda has to be given ample time to establish before weed control products will be able to sprayed on them. This means that during the transition period there will be turf weeds. The good news in once Bermuda is established it can be cleaned up easier than tall fescue. The pre-emergents that are available for Bermuda grass are far superior to those available for tall fescue providing better and longer control. Going into the growing season of 2018 we expect to be near 100% Bermuda with the exception of the deep shade areas which will remain Tall Fescue.



Pest Control–Mite/Scale Control

We treated all of the shrubs for scale in December. We used a product called dormant. Dormant oil is a heavier oil somewhat like a heavy vegetable oil that smothers scale and mites that overwinter as nymphs (young state of insects). This is a very safe way of treating for problem insects with very little impact to beneficial insects, mites and wildlife. Because this product has a high burn potential to plants, we reserve using this product only in the winter when the plants are dormant and temperatures are cooler eliminating the risk of plant burn from the product .

However, the early spring and a high concentration of scale in and around the communities along Bishopstoke, has scale active already this year and present on many shrubs in the community. We will be treating all the shrubs with a granular product called Merit. This is a systemic product meaning it gets taken up by the plants and works from the inside of the plant killing off the scale and providing up to 6 months of protection against pests feeding on the shrubs. Then in late June or early July when we typically start to see the next generation of scale called crawlers start to emerge, we will treat with a contact control product called crosscheck mixed with a light horticulture oil to control the next generation of scale. This 3 stage approach recycles every year to keep the scale below damaging thresholds.

Irrigation Start-up

The irrigation has been pressurized and tested for the start of the season. However we are not running the system routinely yet. We are electing to leave the system off for the time being to help with the transitioning out of the Rye grass in preparation for the Bermuda grass seeding. The system will start to run in May when flowers are installed and the Bermuda grass seeds in put down. The system is in much better shape this year than in previous years. The pumps all came on line without any issues and pressure is strong throughout the system. We did find some leaks and wire breaks that need to be repairs but far less than we have had in past years. We will be making these repairs over the upcoming weeks so that when we start the Bermuda grass seeding the system will be completely functional and be ready to deliver the water we need to get the seed to germinate and begin to establish.

Retreat Drive erosion control, Spring plant replacements, Mulch

Mulching is schedule to begin Monday the 17th. In many places we will be reducing the size of the mulch beds where the beds are too large and are simply empty mulch space. New bed lines will be edged before the mulch is installed and the void between the old bed lines and the new bed lines will be seeded with Bermuda grass. This should help to reduce some of the mulch quantities and free up other areas to be mulched that haven't been mulched in years past due to community budget constraints

We are working with the community and have developed a long term erosion control plan for the beds along Retreat drive introducing more ground covers, rock and other elements to stabilize the problematic wash out areas. This will be done in phases to help meet community budgetary constraints over the next few seasons.

The board and BrightView have started our spring walk of the community to assess the need for replacement plants. We will be introducing some new variety of plants to the community to bring more color and to establish hardier plant material weighing in factors such as light exposure, direction the units are facing and adjacent plant material. In some places we are introducing new plant material adjacent to existing hedges knowing in the future the hedges will be transitioned to different hardier plants. One example of this is with some of the Loropetalum shrubs which prefer partial shade over full sun. The ones that are in full sun are starting to decline and will need to be replaced especially on southern and western exposures, as we lose the Loropetalum in these areas we will replace them one by one with plants that are colorful but also better adapted to the sun exposures on these units. A few of the new plants that are will be as replacements are Weigela for full sun exposure and rose replacements with Rose Rosette disease, Encore azaleas in varies colors (Autumn Rouge, Autumn Chiffon, Autumn Twist, and Autumn Moonlight), and Sunset Ligustrum for low hedging plants.

