



Whitehills Neighborhood Association of East Lansing Spring NEWSLETTER 2014

Improving Your Property? Dot the "i's" and

Cross the "t's"



With springtime in its full glory, and summer close on its heels, dreams of porches, patios, pools, gardening sheds, fences, expanded living space, and other exterior home improvement projects naturally follow. But before you put your ideas into practice, be aware of the following:

1. Most construction requires a site plan and building permit from the City of East Lansing. Contact the Planning, Building & Development Department at 517.319.6930 for help with obtaining the proper permit.
2. Each section of the Whitehills Subdivision is governed by a set of restrictive covenants that apply to all homeowners. The covenants "run with the land", i.e. relate to both longtime property owners and to new residents who just recently purchased their homes. Plans for exterior home improvement projects such as those listed above must be submitted for review and approval by the Whitehills Neighborhood Association Pride/Covenants Committee.

Don't find yourself in the position of having to "undo" a project. Submit your proposal to Thomas Jones, Whitehills Neighborhood Association president and chair of the Pride/Covenants Committee. Tom can be reached at 517.410.5303.



New Website Assists Gardeners in Choosing Impatiens Alternatives

Gardeners and landscapers looking for alternative plants to impatiens because of downy mildew infections can utilize a new Michigan State University Extension website (posted on February 21, 2013 by Tom Dudek, Michigan State University Extension, and Kristin Getter, Michigan State University Extension, Department of Horticulture).

Gardeners who dealt with downy mildew infections in impatiens in 2012 will be interested in a Michigan State University Extension website that lists alternative plants to consider. The user-friendly website, *Alternatives to Impatiens*, briefly describes the potential problems with downy mildew and provides a whole host of alternative plants to consider. The website is offered in two formats: a traditional website (flor.hrt.msu.edu/IDM/index.htm) and a mobile-optimized website (viewed from a smartphone at flor.hrt.msu.edu/IDM/mobileindex.htm).

Gardeners and landscapers are encouraged to plant alternatives if they experienced plant loss due to downy mildew within the last two years. Symptoms of impatiens downy mildew include leaf yellowing followed by leaf curling and then leaf dropping (Photo 1), or a fuzzy-white coating on the underside of leaves (Photo 2).

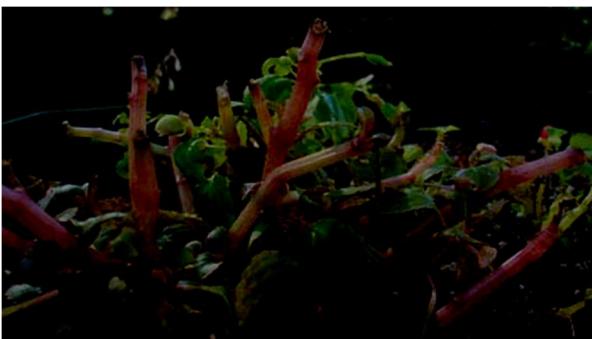


Photo 1. A container of garden impatiens that has been infected with impatiens downy mildew. Notice the leaf yellowing, leaf curling and, finally, leaf dropping.



Photo 2. The underside of an impatiens leaf infected with downy mildew. Notice the fuzzy-white coating.



Don't Fence Me In

When Al White developed Whitehills in the decades of the 1950's, 60's and 70's, he envisioned a gracious neighborhood of curving streets and well-constructed homes surrounded by green space that flowed from yard to yard. The restrictive covenants that apply to your property outline the parameters within which fences may be constructed. All fences require the approval of the WNA Pride/Covenants Committee. If you are contemplating a fence, consider how it will affect your neighbors. Will it interfere with their sightlines? If so, it might not be permissible under the covenants. Once approved and constructed, are you ready to accept the responsibility of keeping the fence in good operational order, with needed paint and repairs? If not, perhaps a fence isn't such a good idea. Whatever you decide, remember to obtain the required approval, and consider the most minimal, least intrusive fencing that will provide privacy and safety while enhancing not only your property, but that of your neighbor.

How Do You Do?

You might have noticed all the bikes and children's toys in the front yards of many Whitehills homes. The last few years have seen a welcome influx of young families in the subdivision. If you have purchased a home in the subdivision recently, contact Jessica Cohen, chair of the Whitehills Neighborhood Association Welcome Committee. She, or another member of the committee, will be sure to stop by for a personal visit, help familiarize you with the neighborhood and add you to the list of Whitehills homeowners. Jessica's telephone number is 412.977.6199.

The Check's in the Mail

In every autumn newsletter, the Whitehills Neighborhood Association is able to acknowledge and thank Whitehills property owner who have paid their yearly Association dues, which are currently \$40. These members of our community enthusiastically do their part to support the many endeavors undertaken by the Board to make Whitehills a great place to live. Some of those projects include this newsletter, maintenance and landscaping of neighborhood entrances, sponsoring social events such as the Halloween Parade and the Winter Gathering, keeping a high profile presence in East Lansing city government so that neighborhood needs are met, tackling special issues such as the future of our local school and thoughtful development of the Carriage Hills shopping area, designating Whitehills a rental overlay district, creating and updating the Whitehills Neighborhood Association website (www.wnael.com), holding an annual meeting and much more. If you haven't yet paid your 2014 dues, send your check to WNA Treasurer Steven Ivkovich at Post Office Box 1213, East Lansing, 48862. You can also pay your dues by utilizing PayPal---instructions can be found at www.wnael.com. Steve's telephone number is 517.812.2128.



A Big Thank You to the Flower Lady and the Landscaping Chair

Perhaps you don't know that the Woodland Pass entrance to our neighborhood belongs to the City of East Lansing, rather than to the Whitehills Subdivision. However, City funds are not allocated to landscape the island at that busy access point. That's where WNA Board members Roberta McElmurry and Kevin Sayers, (who is also chair of the Landscape Committee), come in. Both have generously given of their time, talents and pocketbooks to make this neighborhood entrance a beacon of welcome. It's Kevin who hauls and spreads mulch. And it's Roberta who puts her very green thumb to beautiful use by planting and pruning the perennial flowers you enjoy every time you turn down Woodland Pass. Dedicated neighbors such as Roberta and Kevin make things lovely for the rest of us. The next time you see either of them, please stop a moment to express your thanks.

Why Isn't the Island on My Street Landscaped?

The reason is simple: with about 50% of Whitehills homeowners paying Association dues, Whitehills Neighborhood Association funds are utilized to get the most bang for the buck. When residents whose homes are located near street islands conscientiously pay their dues, then there are financial resources available to expend on the care of the smaller common areas. Where a majority of property owners fail to contribute their fair share, however, budget constraints dictate difficult choices in expenditures.



Take It Slow

With the return of balmy temperatures, the streets of Whitehills are filled with walkers, bikers, joggers, dog-walkers, families with their toddlers and baby strollers, and older residents out for a stroll. The speed limit in subdivision streets is 25 mph. And stop signs actually mean "STOP"! Residents have expressed their concern about drivers who treat the neighborhood lanes as a testing ground for the Indy 500. When you turn into a neighborhood street from Saginaw, Lake Lansing Road, Hagadorn or Abbot, take a deep breath, look at the beauty around you, and bring both yourself and your vehicle to a slow, sedate, appreciative pace.

Tips For Power Outages

Last December's multi-day electricity outages left many of us feeling like early American pioneers. Eventually the lights went back on, but another outage will eventually occur, and there are some common-sense things you can do to make it a little less stressful. Our thanks to Officer Steve Whelan, ELPD, for the following:

- If you leave your home overnight, put your faucets on a very slow drip to avoid frozen pipes.
- Keep several flashlights in your utility closet for use when the lights go out. Be sure to keep the batteries separated in a plastic zippered bag until needed. If batteries are stored inside the flashlights, they will slowly lose their charge, or drain completely.
- Never use a gasoline generator or a kerosene heater inside. Follow manufacturer directions precisely to avoid inhaling fumes.
- Make certain each floor of your house has a carbon monoxide detector. Remember, carbon monoxide has little to no odor. By the time you figure out something is wrong, it may be too late.
- If your landline phone service is malfunctioning, be certain to contact a neighbor who can check on you from time to time until service is restored.
- Keep a good supply of candles and matches. Make certain the candles are in sturdy holders and that candle flames are far away from any flammable material.
- Install a security system in your home, to keep your property safe while you are away at alternate lodgings during the outage.
- Go the Internet for further tips before the next unpredictable power outage.



Neighborhood Watch/NIXLE

One of the easiest, and best, ways to keep Whitehills safe and crime-free is to keep your eyes open. If you see worrisome behavior, or unsafe neighborhood conditions, contact Roberta McElmurry at 332-1575 by telephone, or robertamcel@gmail.com by email. The City of East Lansing Police Department provides emergency alerts and notifications to those who have signed up for NIXLE. Go to www.cityofeastlansing.com, and follow the prompts and links that will allow you to add your contact information. This is a wonderful service, and a good way to keep yourself informed of emergency events.

Summer Meet-n-Greet/Ice Cream Social....keep your eyes open for August date!!

WNAEL Board Members:

President: Tom Jones (332-1683)

Vice President: Mike Kreutziger

Treasurer: Stephen Ivkovich (812-2128)

Secretary: Mary McDaniel

Members-at-large:

Megan Busque (Welcome Committee)

Jessica Cohen (Welcome Committee)

Hillary Henderson (Summer Meet-n-Greet; Halloween Parade)

Mark McDaniel (Community Development; Marketing)

Roberta McElmurry (Pride Committee; Neighbor Alert: 517-332-1575)

Mike Perry (Pride Committee; Winter Party)

Kevin Sayers (Landscaping Committee)

Meri Anne Stowe (Newsletter; Pride Committee)

Elizabeth Vanis (Landscaping Committee)

Website Administrator: Michael Mackoul

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