



HAPPY SPRING

It's been a challenging spring for many reasons. The covid pandemic has changed the way students are taught and businesses make a profit. The Heathers Board of Directors has continued to meet via Zoom – a platform that was alien to most a few short months ago and now has become a ubiquitous form of communication for just about everyone.

The pandemic, although terrifying on many levels, has also brought out the best in people. At the beginning, masks were recommended but hard to come by because of the sudden surge in demand. Heathers resident Erika Kalman was one of many people who stepped up to fill the need. She made many masks for her friends and family.

As you may have noticed, there have been many challenges with the irrigation system this year. The pump, the valves, and the electrical system have proved to be problematic. Please be aware that the Irrigation Committee and Cabrio Properties have been working very hard to resolve all the issues. President John Bowker has been on site almost daily, communicating with contractors and tracking down issues and answering questions asked by homeowners. Issues are being addressed.

Included in this packet of information is a new spec sheet that you are asked to place in your Heathers Handbook. This Board has made a couple of changes to what materials are permitted for decks, roof shingles, and deck awnings. It is hoped that these changes will allow homeowners to upgrade their property with the newer materials that will decrease maintenance. As time goes on, technology changes and manufacturers modify their products or go out of business. We hope to keep up with these changes while maintaining the beauty and harmony of the Heathers.

PICKLE BALL IS HERE

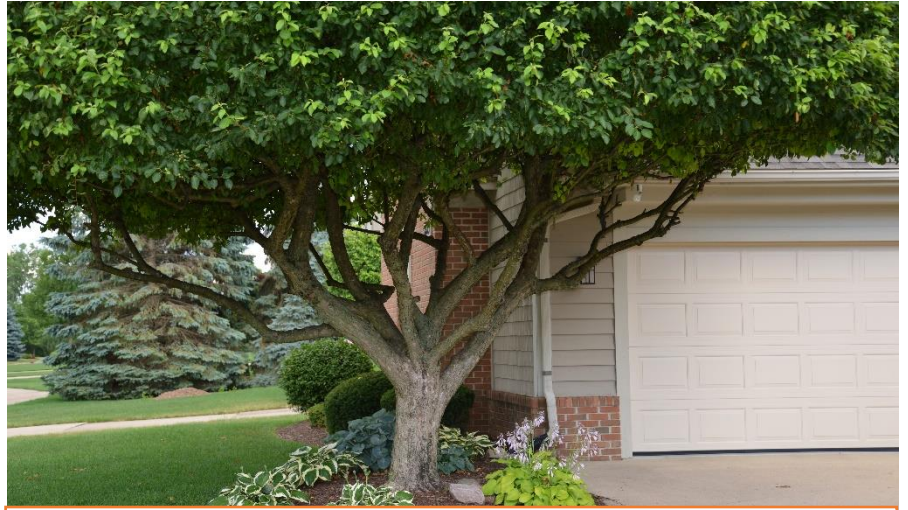
As of this writing, pickleball courts will be available at Stonebridge by July 14. Stonebridge residents Carol Skala and Sue Wilkins were tireless advocates for getting the game lines painted on the tennis courts. The residents currently play through the Saline Senior Center at Liberty Middle School but are looking forward to the short commute to the courts here in the neighborhood. Pickleball has become quite popular in recent times because it is easy to play and learn. Heathers resident Marsha Hubbard is an experienced pickleball player and is happy to answer any questions you may have. Please email her at a2hubbard@yahoo.com. Additionally, there are lots of great references online, such as <https://www.pickleball.com>. More information is available at www.stonebridgecommunity.org See you on the courts!



LET'S TALK PRUNING

Judy Cox of the Landscape
Committee

Pruning is a Horticultural and Silviculture practice involving the selective removal of certain parts of a plant, such as branches, buds and roots. **Reasons to prune plants** include deadwood removal, shaping (by controlling or redirecting growth), improving or sustaining health, reducing risk from falling branches, preparing nursery specimens for transplanting, and both harvesting and increasing the yield or quality of flowers and fruits.



A well-pruned tree can add beauty and value to your home

The practice entails **targeted** removal of diseased, damaged, dead, non-productive, structurally unsound, or otherwise unwanted tissue from landscape plants and crops.

THE HEATHERS landscaping contract currently does not include pruning services. We have trimming services which will happen three times this year, (including fall clean out) for both trees and bushes surrounding the front and sides of our homes. The Heathers properties include many mature trees and bushes that continually need a bit of "sprucing" up in order to maintain their health and beauty.

Currently some homeowners take it upon themselves to prune around their homes (which is greatly appreciated and recognized), and likewise the landscape committee members have taken on the task of helping out to do a bit of pruning for common property areas and a few others. Thank you Judy, Mary Pat, and Gerry.

In light of the potential need for a "pruning year", this year's landscape walk through will include an accounting of HOA trees and bushes that are in need of a good pruning. This list will be discussed, for scope and volunteer feasibility, and/or an estimated special assessment will be put together for presentation at the Annual meeting to decide whether funds should be allocated to take on this venture.

Your help would be greatly appreciated. If you are aware of specific HOA pruning needs around your property, that you feel you cannot address, please bring them to our attention as we walk about, or simply send an email. The Landscape Committee is planning to make their walk-around on August 4th, 2020, in the morning.

It is worthwhile to revisit this article from the 2008 spring issue of Stonebridge *Tidings* by Steve Scheruing, horticulturalist at Twin Oaks Landscape, Inc. Steve Scheruing has been a valuable resource to the Heathers Landscape committee and we thank him for his permission to reprint.

Trees

The Most Valuable Element of Your Landscape

By Steve Scheuring, Horticulturalist at Twin Oaks Landscape, Inc. 2008

The landscape of Stonebridge's common areas and in most of the individual residences has been maturing for quite a few years, and while maturing, minimal, if any, pruning has been undertaken.

Long-term management of trees can ensure continued aesthetic value and healthy growth of this precious feature. Proper, conscientious pruning reduces the potential for loss of limbs or other failures during extreme weather and nothing protects a tree against disease more than skillful pruning.

It is arguable that trees are the most valuable landscape element. Care for them and your trees will live a long healthy life. "Proper pruning helps trees live longer," said Mike Maddox, Horticulture Educator University of Wisconsin. "On the other hand, poor pruning practices, such as topping, make trees less attractive, more prone to pest and weather problems and can actually shorten their life span."

For pruning medium and large trees, it is generally desirable to hire a professional arborist. These folks come to your home prepared, and homeowners can avoid injuring themselves or damaging the tree, nearby buildings, utility wires or other landscape plants.

For pruning smaller trees (less than twelve (12) feet), here are a few basic hints to follow:

- 1. Use the right tools.*
- 2. Do not prune newly planted trees unless a branch is broken, diseased or dead.*
- 3. Never top a tree because this leads to poor branching structure and makes limbs vulnerable to breaking.*
- 4. Young trees should be pruned to encourage a well-branched canopy.*
- 5. When pruning trees, there are several types of branches to remove including:
 - a. Dead, broken, or diseased branches whenever you see them.*
 - b. Remove the weaker of two branched that are rubbing together.*
 - c. Prune out water sprouts and suckers.*
 - d. Occasionally, it is necessary to remove lower branches on mature trees.**
- 6. Pruning wounds are best left unpainted. Tree wound treatments are not recommended for most pruning cuts.*

Finally, there is one cardinal rule: never leave a stub and never make a flush cut. Stubs are unattractive, do not heal over, and can result in decay moving into the tree. Cuts made flush to the trunk result in large wounds that take a long time to close. Make pruning cuts just beyond the branch collar.