

# Any home improvement project requires ARC approval in advance

As the summer months are about to become a memory and our children and grandchildren prepare for the new school year, I am amazed at how time goes by so quickly.

In July, our family celebrated the first birthday of our youngest granddaughter. This month, we are planning a visit to Florida Gulf Coast University with our oldest granddaughter as she prepares for her freshman year of college.

It seems like just yesterday that we celebrated our oldest granddaughter's first birthday. So often I wish we could put time at a standstill, but instead it continues to go by quickly.

As we approach the autumn season next month and possibly some cooler weather, many residents may consider a home improvement project. If you are anticipating external improvements to your home, please review your restrictive covenants, which require you to get approval from the Architectural Review Committee prior to beginning the project.

The ARC meets every Wednesday to review applications. The approval process takes approximately two weeks if the required information is submitted with the application.

If you have any questions regarding the architectural review process or the required information that must be submitted with the application, please call the Community Standards office at 751-3912 or visit the Community Standards' Web page on the District website at [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org).

We definitely received a considerable amount of rain this summer that resulted in a lot of growth in the landscaped areas. If you are anticipating trimming back your shrubs or other



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landscape items for curbside pick-up, as a reminder, the tree limbs or branches may not exceed 4 feet in length and must be bundled and tied. Lawn clippings and similar yard waste should be placed in biodegradable bags.

Considering the amount of rain we received, it is also important to remember that you do not have to irrigate just because it is your scheduled day. Irrigation systems should be operated only when the lawn begins to show signs of stress.

This will encourage deeper root growth, which will help develop more drought-tolerant lawns and landscaping. It will also save water, which protects our water resources and provides savings on water bills.

Signs of lawn and landscaping stress include:

- lingering footprints or mower tracks
- grass blades or leaf blades beginning to close lengthwise
- the top few inches of soil feeling dry

Lawns generally will need water before landscape plants (excluding flowers). Therefore, if the lawn is being irrigated when it shows signs of stress, the landscape plants will be adequately irrigated. Flower beds should be hand watered with a hose using an automatic shutoff nozzle. You should also use a hose with an automatic shutoff if the lawn has dry spots.

As another reminder, only

stormwater should enter into the storm drains. We often receive phone calls related to residential landscaping contractors blowing grass clippings into the storm drains, and residents disposing of their plastic bags containing pet waste into the storm drains.

If your lawn is maintained by a landscape contractor, please take the time to inform them that only stormwater should go into the storm drains. After picking up your pet's waste, please take it home and properly dispose of it.

Community Development Districts are required by the Clean Water Act to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit program. This program is administered by the State of Florida with a goal of reducing the amount of pollution that enters storm drain systems.

We also have a District policy that prohibits unauthorized discharges of any kind and illicit connections to the storm drain system. An illicit connection is any connection that allows non-stormwater discharge to enter the storm drain system.

An example of an illicit connection is pumping pool water into the storm drain. When draining your swimming pool, the water should be discharged without impacting your neighbor's property and over a vegetated surface so some level of filtration can occur.

As described in District policy, pollutants include, but are not limited to: paints, varnishes, solvents; oil and other automotive fluid; nonhazardous liquid and solid waste; yard waste; refuse, rubbish, garbage, litter or other discarded or abandoned objects;

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pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers; hazardous substances; animal waste; and waste or residue that result from constructing a building or structure.

Basically, a pollutant is anything that isn't stormwater that enters the storm drain. For additional information on how

to keep our community environmentally safe, go to [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org) and click on The Villages Water Wisdom icon.

In the past, we have received many comments from residents regarding household trash and recycling pickup when a holiday falls on a Monday and there is no sanitation pickup service.

For the residents in Marion and Sumter counties with a Monday schedule, this results in

their household trash and recycling items being picked up once that week because of the holiday. The District communicated these concerns and comments to our sanitation hauler CH2MHill and we are pleased to inform you that we worked out a solution for the Labor Day holiday on Sept. 7.

If you are a resident in the Marion and Sumter county portions of The Villages and you have sanitation pickup service on

Monday, your pickup for both household trash and recycling items for Labor Day will occur Sept. 5. We will post this on the District website, announce it at Welcome Wednesday (our weekly informational session that meets every Wednesday at 11 a.m. at the District Office in Downtown Sumter Landing, 984 Old Mill Run), e-notification and other media outlets. Please help us get the word out by telling all

your friends and neighbors.

Enjoy the final days of summer, continue to stay cool, remember to hydrate when you are outside in the brutal heat and we'll meet you next week, here at Our Place.

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