



Features:

A Winter for the Record
page 1

Save with Low-Voltage Lighting
page 1

Celebrating 10 Great Years
page 2

According to Convention
page 3

Thou Shalt Not Commit Crape Murder
page 3

Note from the President
page 4

Schedule and Calendar
page 4

Welcome
page 4



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Leisure News

Your Source for Landscape News and Information

A Winter for the Record

Most people around here can't remember when it has been so cold, or for so long. Meteorologists report that out of the last 35 days, 32 have been below normal with nighttime temperatures below freezing. And three snow events. On January 29, one area resident reports "My sister, her friend and I measured how much snow over at our house by RDU. Over 5 and a half inches!"

"It could be one of the coldest winters, or the coldest, winter of the decade"

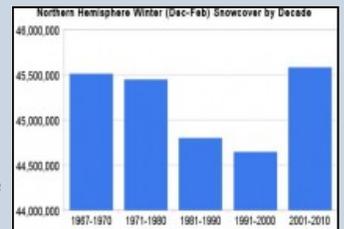
It has prompted many to call into question the whole idea of 'Global Warming'. In a February 14 report, Donald Trump even said "the Nobel committee should take the Nobel Prize back from **Al Gore**"

The longer view

This Winter has been cold—and snowy— but not the worst. Steve Goddard in a Guest Post on Watts

Up With That writes "Now that we have reached the end of the meteorological winter (December-February,) Rutgers University Global Snow Lab numbers (1967-2010) show that the just completed decade (2001-2010) had the snowiest Northern Hemisphere winters on record. The just completed winter was also the second snowiest on record, exceeded only by 1978. Average winter snow extent during the past decade was greater than 45,500,000 km², beating out the 1960s by about 70,000 km², and beating out the 1990s by nearly 1,000,000 km². The bar

chart shows average winter snow extent for each decade going back to the late 1960s. Average winter snow extent has increased since the 1990s, by nearly the area of Texas and California combined.



(Continued on page 2)



Save with Low-Voltage Lighting

Don't come home to a dark house.

Turn your home into a festival of lights with our architectural-grade lighting systems. Whether you are returning from a long day at the office or that get-away vacation, enjoy the secure feeling that your home is well illuminated.



See your home in a whole new light.

Our lighting designer will visit your home and consult with you on a plan that addresses your needs, introduces the lighting possibilities and meets your budget. With your approval he will develop a plan using photographs of the home, property surveys and your budget to develop a custom solution. Features include the safety of low-voltage, the economy of long-life bulbs and automatic operation with photocells and timers. We can even integrate it with your existing home lighting and computer.

Save the planet—use less energy—and SAVE \$\$

Dick Dee reports that his low-voltage lighting system cost him only \$44 a year to run, and that's with halogen bulbs. Were he to convert to LED, the operating cost would only \$4 per year. The cost to install such a system? Expect to pay between \$500 and two thousand dollars. Compared to line-voltage lighting you would break even in 1-4 years.

Don't Delay! Call **919-847-1733** now for your appointment with our lighting expert, and enjoy ten percent off with our special Winter discount through March 31, 2010.

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- **Last 50,000 hrs**
- **Produce warm, white light**
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- **Are safe and cool to the touch**



A Winter for the Record (continued from page1)

Three of the four snowiest winters in the Rutgers record occurred during the last decade - the top four winters are (in order) 1978, 2010, 2008, 2003. The third week of February, 2010 had the second highest weekly extent (52,170,000 m2) out of the 2,229 week record.

PROPHETIC FORECAST

Sept. 28, 2009 (Bloomberg) — The U.S. Northeast may have the coldest winter in a decade because of a weak El Nino, a warming current in the Pacific Ocean, according to [Matt Rogers](#), a forecaster at Commodity Weather Group.

"Weak El Ninos are notorious for cold and snowy weather on the Eastern seaboard," Rogers said in a Bloomberg Television interview from Washington. "About 70 percent to 75 percent of the time a weak El Nino will deliver the goods in terms of above-normal heating demand and cold weather. It's pretty good odds."

Warming in the Pacific often means fewer Atlantic hurricanes and higher temperatures in the U.S. Northeast during January, February and March, according to the National Weather Service. El Nino occurs every two to five years, on average, and lasts about 12 months, according to the service.

[This year, with a weak El Nino, the effect will be the opposite.]

"It could be one of the coldest winters, or the coldest, winter of the decade," Rogers said.

The really long view So what about global warming?

German and Russian scientists say that it is normal for an interglacial period like the one just ending to finish with one or more brief - in geological terms - spells of warming before the glaciers return.

According to [scientists] based at the Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung (UFZ) and at the Russian Academy of Sciences, in the Earth's history thus far there have been eras where the glaciers covered much of Europe, lasting about 100,000 years. These are separated by warmer interglacial periods lasting around 10,000 years. We are currently at the end of an interglacial era called the Holocene.

The scientists, looking into the last interglacial period - the Eemian - which ended around 115,000 years ago, say they have found that it ended with "significant climate fluctuations" before the rule of the glaciers returned.

The scientists got their results by examining ancient lake sediments exposed by modern open-cast mining in Russia and Germany. They believe that the end of the Eemian interglacial epoch saw "possibly at least two" warming events, according to a statement issued by the UFZ.

"The observed instability with the proven occurrence of short warming events during the transition from the last interglacial to the last glacial epoch could be, when viewed carefully, a



general, naturally occurring characteristic of such transition phases," concludes UFZ [scientist] Dr Tatjana Boettger.

Boettger and her fellow researchers say that the Eemian ice-free period wound up with sudden - in these terms - warming spells and serious changes in vegetation. Then the glaciers surged south, at their high tide 21,000 years ago reaching as far as Berlin.

This Weichselian Glacial era ended around 15,000 years ago, leading to the conditions which have been seen for all of human history with the ice caps confined to the polar regions. The UFZ says that this Holocene era reached its "highest point so far around 6000 years ago" and that we might now expect to see sudden warmings and changes as at the end of the Eemian - followed by a slow descent into another freezing glacial era.

Do we have an impact? Yes, possibly. Some scientist feel that global warming may actually trigger an 'Ice Age'. As ice caps melt, they dilute the salt water which drives the Gulf Stream, the ocean 'river' that brings warm water, and moderating climate to the Northern hemisphere of the Atlantic. British scientist have detected a slowing of the Gulf stream since the 1950s. By accelerating this warming period, we may in fact be hastening major climatic change—for the colder. Just as the oceans set the recent Winter record, they'll determine our future. 

Celebrating 10 Great Years!



Congratulations to Julia Graz! Julia bought her Apex home from a then current customer of Leisure Landscapes and they recommended our services to her. As is often the case with a new home, Julia wanted to make it "hers", so she asked Leisure Landscapes to propose some changes. We redesigned some of the beds, installed scotch roses and made some irrigation system modifications. We even repaired the fence and windowsills. But the major changes came in 2004, when we added stack-stone garden walls, flowering trees, shrubs and perennials in a major reworking of the back yard. Throughout all this time, and to the present, Julia was a Complete Care Plan and IrriGuard customer. Here's a little more about her.

Julia was born in Missouri, the daughter of an Army doctor. When he completed his tour of duty, the family relocated to Long Island, New York, where Julia grew up with a sister and two brothers. When Julia was near college age, the family relocated to Omaha, Nebraska, and Julia majored in math at Creighton University. As if that wasn't enough, she went on to NC State to get a masters in statistics. Julia now works for PPD a company that specializes in the pharmaceutical industry, and evaluates clinical trials to see if the drugs work and the effects of new products are 'statistically significant'.

When not at work, you can find Julia curled up with her Kindle reading fiction or with her fiancé, Lee, learning to play golf or traveling to pan for gold and taste the fruits of North Carolina's mountain wineries. 



Sign up a friend for a maintenance contract, and you'll receive one month of FREE maintenance from Leisure Landscapes!

Offer good through 3/31/10

According to **Convention**



Paul Martin

One of the benefits we bring to you is the collective experience of the Green Industry. These skills are learned and shared at our annual conferences and conventions. I attended two of those this Winter, and bring back some good information to share with you.

The **Green and Growin' Show** is the major show in North Carolina for the landscaping, irrigation and nursery industries. It is held in January in Greensboro and includes a trade show of products and services, lectures on

timely topics and continuing education courses. The second event is the **NC Turfgrass Conference and Show** held in Raleigh, also in January, with emphasis on the sod industry. Sustaining both events is a cadre of PhDs from NC State with some exciting research results. Here are the highlights:

- ◆ Apply chemical pre-emergent **crabgrass preventers** early: Jan and February, and no later than March 20. A second application is advisable for Fescue, but not necessary with warm season turf.
- ◆ If converting a lawn from Fescue to **Bermuda**, and there is no irrigation, then seed in March.
- ◆ **Mowing height is the single most important factor** for lawn health and weed avoidance. The

optimum heights are:

- ◆ Fescue — 3 1/2 to 4"
- ◆ Bermuda — 2"

A Fescue lawn mowed at 4" will completely shade out crabgrass and is 85% effective in diminishing Bermuda incursion. Other broadleaf weeds are similarly discouraged.

- ◆ Treat for **Japanese Beetles** in June when you see the adults flying by an application of 'Merit' to the ground to kill the hatched grubs.
- ◆ **Fire Ants** are most effectively treated with bait type pesticides.
- ◆ **Turf Paint** may be better than overseeding for a green warm season lawn in Winter.

Thou Shalt Not Commit **CRAPE MURDER**

Posted February 9, 2010, Lee County Cooperative Extension, NCSU

Crape Myrtles are a very common landscape tree in [the area], and for good reason. The tree has a wonderfully long bloom time and beautiful bark – a plus for the winter garden. Around this time of the year, [we] begin to see one of the worst horticultural practices being committed on these trees. Those of us in the horticultural world refer to it as **crape murder**.

Many people incorrectly believe that crape myrtles must be severely pruned back to an arbitrary height to flower well. This practice is also known as topping. Topping is extremely harmful to the tree – it can increase the amount of stem decay, which can cause the whole tree to die. Topping also results in more dead branches in the canopy.

When a tree is topped, many vigorous, succulent shoots start to grow from the cut areas. These shoots are poorly attached and can actually break off with high winds. The succulent shoots also attract aphids, which love to feed on new plant growth. An increase in the aphid population can result in more sooty mold. Sooty mold is a blackish fungus that can appear on the leaves in summer when aphids are present.

Topping destroys the natural beauty and form of the tree. This is especially apparent in the winter after the leaves have dropped. Topped crape myrtles are graceless, mutilated trunks. And what about the bloom? Topping can decrease the length of bloom time and the number of flower clusters since only one

flower cluster blooms per shoot.

So what is the correct way to prune crape myrtles? Actually crape myrtles require very little pruning. Shaping and pruning starts with picking the right cultivar for the location you have in mind. Not all crape myrtles were created equal – they range greatly in mature height. By picking a crape myrtle that fits into your landscape, you cut down on the amount of maintenance work you will need to do.

If you must prune, wait until late winter or early spring. Make cuts back to a main branch or trunk – do not leave stubs. You will want to locate the collar region of the branch, this is a region that will heal quickly and seal off the wound – it is not flush with the trunk! Do not apply pruning paint.

When choosing which limbs to remove, follow the three Ds of pruning. Remove branches that are dead, diseased, or damaged.

If you want to form a tree shape, you can limb up the tree. Remove limbs 1/3 to 1/2 of the way up the tree. This is a great way to show off the peeling cinnamon bark! Be careful not to remove limbs that are larger than 8" in diameter as these large branches can result in trunk decay.

Don't let your crape myrtle be a victim! Proper planning and preventative pruning will help your crape myrtle develop into a gorgeous tree that will dazzle the neighbors. For more information on pruning crape myrtles, click www.ncsu.edu.





Paul Martin

The big news again is the weather—this time record levels of snow and cold temperatures from New England to Florida and throughout the northern hemisphere. My article *A Winter for the Record* examines the literature to determine if we are headed for global warming or something else. The article begins on page 1.

One of the things that has enabled Leisure Landscape to weather the economic storm has been the work that you, our existing customers, have sent our way. We thank you and want to recognize our loyal patrons. The article *Celebrating 10 Great Years* on page 2 talks about another such person, Julia Graz, who is being recognized on her 10th anniversary with Leisure Landscapes with a \$500 Leisure Gift Certificate.

One of the things you have learned to expect from us is a level of professionalism that draws on the resources of the Green Industry. In the article *According to Convention*, I share some of the tips gleaned from this Winter's conferences and shows and present pruning dos and don'ts in the article *Thou Shalt Not Commit Crape Murder*.

Finally, I would like to welcome our new patrons for this Winter and urge all of you to support the General Assembly Chorus as they stage *Harmony, Hope and Healing*, a benefit concert for the Pretty in Pink foundation. Reserve the date, Saturday April 24, 2010 at Meymandi Hall, the Progress Energy Center for Performing Arts.

WELCOME!
to our new Complete Care Plan customers for 2010
Paul Peterson, North Ridge; Frank and Carla Pollard, Sheffield Manor

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for SPRING!
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The General Assembly CHORUS
presents
Harmony Hope & Healing
An evening of A cappella.
Featuring Acoustix and Jackpot!
Saturday, April 24, 2010 2:00pm Matinee 7:30pm Evening
At the Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts, Meymandi Concert Hall
2 South Street • Raleigh, NC
For Tickets Call 741-6582 or order online at www.GeneralAssemblyChorus.org
A BENEFIT CONCERT FOR
Pretty in Pink FOUNDATION
when breast cancer is present, and health insurance is not

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- ◆ help find ways to reduce your cost or restructure payments
- ◆ Provide service options, including outsourcing

For more information, ask for Paul at 847-1733

Leisure Landscape's Weekly Maintenance Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Blue Team Leader: Carmen	Raleigh Hayes Barton, Mordecia, Oakwood, Sprint, Marshall & Taylor, Gardner St., Lake Boone, Thieves Market Mall,	Cary/Apex Providence Place, Carpenter Village, Cameron Pond, Charleston Village, Waldon Creek, Haddon Hall, Sword Gate, Olde Salem, Oxford Hunt, Bond Lake, Preston,	Wake Forest / Raleigh Wakefield Plantation, Heritage, St. Andrews Lake, Thornrose Hunters Knoll, Durant Trails	Durham/Mebane/Chapel Hill/Pittsboro Kerr Drugs, Briardale, Duke, Winstead, Carriage Hill, Timberline, Boothe Hill, Southern Village, Summerset, Northwoods, Lakehurst Point	North Raleigh Treverton, North Ridge, Alyson Pond, Durant Trails, Hunters Knoll,	Wake Forest Shoppes of Heritage, Heritage Pointe Shoppes, Power Secure,
Red Team Leader: Miguel	Raleigh / Cary Stonehaven, Lochmere, Lochmere Birkhaven, Enchanted Oaks, Kerr Fuquay-Varina, Eagle Ridge, Wynstone, Lane Ridge, Jamison Park	Raleigh / Cary Brookhaven West, Olde Raleigh, Wynthrop, Laurel Hills, Wessex, Academy Plaza, Pure Gold, Braeloch, Trinity Grove, Weston Estates.	Raleigh/Creedmoor Grandale, Durham, Cambridge, Kensington, Wyndfall, MacGregor Downs, Henley, Sheffield Manor, Honeycutt, Avanelea, Bedford, Falls River, Ethan's Glen, Creedmoor	North Raleigh Chandler Pointe, Stone Bridge, Bent Tree, Woodbridge, Woodsprings, Durant Professional Center, Reedham Oaks, Greystone, Traemoor, Stonehenge, Wyngate	Raleigh Mapinfo, Wyckford, Hedingham, David Jackson DDS, North Hills, Springdale Estates, Sheldon Pointe, Glen Eden	Special Request Jobs

The Leisure Landscapes Winter Calendar

DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Apply fertilizer to turf ◆ Remove leaves from plant beds ◆ Set Holiday lights and decorations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Apply pine straw and hardwood mulch to beds and natural areas ◆ Apply FloraGuard deer and rabbit repellent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Prune ornamental gasses ◆ Prune trees and shrubs ◆ Apply pre-emergent herbicides