

Springtime at Lorton Valley

Welcome Spring! And welcome all new owners and new tenants who have made Lorton Valley their home over these past 9 months! We hope you are acclimating well to your new surroundings and learning the community. Please don't hesitate to ask our Property Manager or a member of the Board of Directors if questions arise regarding life here at Lorton Valley. And remember, most of what you need to know about the community can be found on our community webpage at: www.lortonvalley.com. Per Lorton Valley Homeowners Association Policy Resolution 9-12 - "Use of Website for Formal Notices", homeowners are reminded that it is mandatory they register on the Associations' website to receive all formal or general community communications. Tenants are strongly encouraged to do the same to ensure they are able to inform themselves of community news.

Spring Community and Home Maintenance Focus Areas

Welcome Spring indeed! Well, at least we are starting to see vestiges of that most exciting and unpredictable start of yearly renewal! Still, unseasonably cold weather has placed a great cloud of uncertainty as we await the consistent warm weather that gets us in the mood to focus on spring cleanup, exterior maintenance projects on our homes, and yard and garden clean-up and planting.

Common Area Improvements

To that end you will see that the HOA has begun long-planned improvements to the common area including: upgrading the front entrance with new planting/arrangement of crepe myrtles, demolition of the brick column, removal of all plants along front of entry way, removal of diseased trees, extension/improvement of the irrigation system, relaying of existing brick walkways, installation of a flagpole, and installation of raised lettering on both sides of the entryway walls depicting "Lorton Valley".

Additionally, we have identified several common area problems related to poor soil, lack of grass, and/or severe erosion. To address these issues we are installing irrigation lines, adding quality soil where appropriate and planting low growing ground cover in specific eroded areas to alleviate the effect of the erosion. We will target at least five (5) areas this year and identify, evaluate and address other areas each year hereafter. Have you noticed an area within the common property that needs evaluation? Let us know. We will check it out and get back to you with our plan of action.

Finally, we have completed development and installation of a new playground in the Gunston Commons subdivision. What remains to be done is the installation of new swing sets coming later in the spring/summer. Yearly inspections, general maintenance, and placement of new playground mulch on our other four (4) playgrounds will be completed by the end of May.

Springtime at Lorton Valley

Individual Home Focus Areas

This Spring the HOA is placing significant emphasis on each and every homeowner doing their part to continue to keep our homes in Lorton Valley livable and well maintained within and even beyond the parameters of our published community standards. Not just a building they occupy for two or three years, or longer, with no apparent awareness/concern of the impact that their neglect and/or indifference has on the short-term condition of the home and how that will affect the long-term value. Many owners/tenants need to ‘step up your game’ and begin the process of bringing your home back to health. Now...this year! Absentee homeowners are reminded that they are ultimately responsible for every aspect of the condition of their home exterior and lot regardless of any understanding they may have with their tenant.

We recognize these preceding comments are very general in nature and do not apply to most homeowners. Some may also be offended at the direct nature of the comments. We stand by these comments as they are a total reflection of the experiences we have had over 13 years of managing this property and do not come from a place of disrespect or disregard. We are observers and recorders of everyday community life at Lorton Valley and intend to see this community thrive, both in value and appearance! For those majority of homeowners who go beyond to maintain their home in a manner expected in this community, we thank you and ask only that by your efforts you try and serve as a community example and be willing to impart your knowledge and enthusiasm to your neighbors who may need a little encouragement.

For all we offer this information below on our focus areas this Spring. If any of these areas of concern apply to you, 30 June 2018 is the cut-off date to have these areas corrected and inspected by the Property Manager. Failure to correct these deficiencies will automatically require an appearance at the monthly meeting of the Covenants Committee to address these issues, and incur monetary assessments, if warranted.

Grass

All homes are now at a minimum of 13 years old. Grassy areas, however little there is, should be well established by now. If not, make the effort now to get your grass in order. Clover and/or weeds, are not grass! Stones, gravel, unless authorized by the HOA, are not neither viable nor authorized replacements. There are numerous products available that, if used properly according to directions, will help you get and maintain a nice lawn. Even if it is postage stamp sized. Water your grass once every other day for a maximum of 20 minutes, less when it rains. Fertilize properly. Cut to no more than 3”- 4 “. Any shorter, you will kill the roots and have to start all over again. Do not use your weed-wacker to cut your grass. It can pull the roots out rather than trim the grass leaving you to start all over again! Note: The small grass strips between the sidewalk and curb in front and side of your home to your property line are yours to maintain.

Springtime at Lorton Valley

Gardens

Gardens must be free of weeds. Weeds often return. Mulch must be used and refreshed annually. Removal of old mulch may be necessary to maintain a neat appearance. You have to weed and re-weed as they return throughout the growing year. Planting flowers, (annuals or perennials), is your call. We don't require you to plant flowers. They certainly add an element of beauty to your home but, it's up to you. Regardless, the garden must still be well-maintained. Stone or gravel gardens must be approved by the HOA. Garden borders must be minimum of 4" above ground. If they have sunken below grade **they must be removed and properly reset**. Stacked borders made of stone, paver, brick, etc., must likewise be properly re-stacked as they become loose, wobbly, and unsightly. Material not designed for stacking should not be used for that purpose. All garden borders require Board approval. Approved applications must be on file. If no approval is in-hand or on file, submittal of documentation must take place by 30 June 2018.

Trees

Every home in Lorton Valley had at least one tree planted in the front of the house at the time of original sale in 2004-2006. Some homeowners removed these trees without HOA approval. If your tree has been removed it must be replaced with a like tree or a tree that has been approved by the HOA. Severely trimming, or topping off trees is not allowed. Hacking of branches half-way is not a generally accepted form of pruning a tree. Trees with half-cut branches must be properly pruned. Branches less than 48" above ground must be considered for removal. If there is a question contact the Property Manager for help in determining the need. **FRUIT TREES** are not allowed. They must be removed and replaced with an approved tree. The HOA is gathering a list of trees that are acceptable for planting in the front or side of the yard and will share that with affected homeowners. It will then be placed on the HOA website. Additionally, some trees may have to be removed as they have root systems that are pressing driveway and sidewalk slabs upwards creating unsightly and unsafe bulges!

Note: If you are unskilled or uninterested in performing these maintenance responsibilities numerous landscaping companies will perform all or some of the aforementioned tasks for a nominal fee or yearly contract. Refer to Angie's List or Google for companies in our local area.

Roofs

Your roof is also 13 years old. Most roofs in Lorton Valley are the 15-20 year variety. Your purchase documents will have the specific life-cycle of your shingles. Periodic storms have impacted numerous roofs in our community. Insurance companies and roofers have been busy with replacement activity. Check your roof out yearly. Look for loose and or missing shingles, especially after a storm with high winds. Often a single shingle or even several can be replaced at rea-

Springtime at Lorton Valley

sonable cost. But, age wise, it will soon be time to re-shingle your home. Start planning for the next several years. Keep checking your roof.

Gutters

Spring is time to check and clean your gutters. Ensure all gutter nails are engaged and the gutter is not pulling away from the fascia board. Ensure your downspouts are properly attached with straps, are clear, the spout end open, not crushed, and that they continue to disperse the water away from the house. Enough said.

Decks

Many of our decks are also getting old. Inspect your deck. Look for wood rot, mold, loose boards, loose deck posts and rails. If present, repair. Do not try and mask wood rot. It doesn't work! You may replace all deck material and post/rails with composite if you want a long-term solution to maintenance. Washing down with a hose and soap is all you would need to do.

The focus areas identified above represent a fraction of items contained in both our Covenants documents, which prescribe general homeowner compliance guidelines to our more detailed Community Architectural Design and Maintenance Standards. When you purchased your house you received two (2) large books containing all information necessary for you to understand homeowners association living. This information is also available on our website located at lor-tonvalley.com.

Over the course of the next few months several other "Newsletters" will be issued covering all manner of community issues, including urgent need for volunteers to staff some of our committees, help with community events such as summer cookouts, Friday night swim, Fall Festival, just to name a few. The events are currently manned by the same one or two individuals, and have been for the past 5 years! Participation as a volunteer can be the difference in having these community events or not.

Got a question, comment? Please contact our Property Manager.

Lorton Valley Homeowners Association
Board of Directors