

Horses: Patrol, training to continue in summer

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Lt. Chris Robertson owns three of the horses used in the mounted patrol. He and East, being horse owners, brought the idea of using a mounted patrol to Police Chief Mike Martin, who then went before the Board of Aldermen to gain permission to try it out.

"It's just another tool for us to use," Robertson said.

Robertson said the horses have exceeded his expectations.

"They are more focused and alert when they are busy working," he said. "They do their best when there's a lot of activity on the Square."

While the horses may add a sense of antiquity by bringing us back to a time when horses were Oxford's main source of transportation, they can also add a certain aroma which has concerned some local business people.

The horses wear "diapers" or "bum bags" that contain their droppings although, from time to time, some escape and wind up on the streets.

"They do their best when there's a lot of activity on the Square."

— LT. CHRIS ROBERTSON
OPD Mounted Patrol

reasons. We can't leave the horses without a rider, opening them up from someone trying to mount them."

During the summer, East said, the patrol will continue to ride on various days to help keep the horses — and their riders — fresh.

"We're also planning on training alternate riders over the summer so if another officer is unable to ride we can fill his place."

Robertson said OPD is hoping to get a grant to purchase more equipment for the mounted patrols.

—alyssa@oxfordeagle.com

"We clean everything up, but we can't do it until after our shift ends," East explains.

"We can't get on and off the horses for security



Lt. Wes Hatcher (from left), Lt. Chris Robertson, Assistant Chief Joey East and Officer Ashley Williams on their horses outside the Lafayette County Courthouse.

GARDENING OXFORD STYLE

Early summer brings host of opportunities

With the weather appearing set to stay warm on through the end of the spring and start of the summer, there are a wide variety of things that you may want to do in May or June to keep your outdoor gardens and landscaping lush and colorful. Below are several tips to consider.

Last minute things that work

— Begonias stuffed into greenery for color.

— Cactus, yucca and succulents can be planted most anytime, or can sit in their containers, tucked among other plants.

— Sprinkle colorful daylily petals on salad or dessert.

They are beautiful and sweet. Eat Stella del Oro for snack (not green part).

— One perfect hydrangea can be an arrangement.

— Three or four hosta leaves in a small teapot make a beautiful arrangement.

— Take your bromeliads outdoors to add color along pathways.

New free plants

— Stick cuttings of forsythia in a clear vase to decorate living area and watch them root.

— Take a teeny, tiny slice of your expensive hosta — that's one leaf plus a bit of the roots — and root in water or potting mix.

— Scrape a bit of bark from an azalea stem, weight it down with a brick or stone so that the stem is barely under the soil. Check next year for new plant.

— Buy a fresh pineapple at the store; peel and eat it, but don't discard the top! Take this and cut away all the tasty remains, place the pineapple greenery and its stub in a clear vase with water just touching the bottom of plant. In a few days, you will have roots and a new pineapple plant.



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Succulents like jade and aloe make a welcome addition to the summer patio. Best of all, they require only occasional watering.

Summer projects with children

Not only are all these projects cheap, they also make wonderful memories for you and your children.

— Purchase enough cheap magnifying glasses that everyone has one (this is to ensure your own sanity). Turn them loose in the garden to search for insects.

— Show them how to get the nectar out of honeysuckle and then you go read a book.

— Purchase cheap plastic flashlights. Let them hunt for beasties in the dark.

— Lay in the grass and watch the clouds move overhead. It will feel as if the earth is moving.

— The first clear, dark, cloudless night, lay in grass and count stars and discuss Star Wars.

— Befriend roly-pollies and worms. Watch ants — not fire ants — at work.

— Plant a child's garden (or row). Use inexpensive seeds and easy to grow plants like marigolds and radishes.

— Let young children help dig potatoes. What fun! A treasure hunt!

"Real" gardening stuff to do

— Don't mow the daffodils yet. They are ugly now; try to remember how beautiful they were. Don't touch them until they are yellow and brown.

— Pinch out the tops of annuals to make them bushier.

— Mark where perennials are so that you will recognize them next year.

— Prune azaleas only if they are leggy and need thickening up. Don't wait too long or you destroy next year's blooms and put on weak growth to face winter. Leave the natural shape of plant. Don't shear into a ball — unless of course if you want to have floral meatballs next year.

— Poison ivy is at its nastiest now. It is abundant, lush and juicy. If you are exposed, thoroughly wash the area within 15 minutes. Try the newer spray to kill it. However, shield your leafy "good" plants with posterboard, or use the chemical as a wipe and take care to avoid touching other plants. A later application may be necessary.

— Tidy up your spent iris by breaking off the canes. Pinch out the top leaves of coleus to thicken them. Pinch off spent petunia blossoms. Begin to pinch back old-timey chrysanthemums when they begin to get leggy.

Another very important thing to do: Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy God's beauty with your family.

Happy gardening!
—oxford.gardenclub@yahoo.com

Plein Air recognized for commitment to conservation

The Mississippi Urban Forest Council has chosen Taylor's Plein Air Neighborhood as the recipient of its 2010 Outstanding Green Development Award.

The annual award is given to one Mississippi development that exemplifies the best use of green space, a commitment to conservation during development, and tree preservation.

The Mississippi Urban Forest Council is the leading volunteer group in Mississippi for urban and community forestry.

"The Plein Air development is a great example of a developer building with trees in mind," Executive Director Donna Yowell said in a written statement.

"They not only went out of their way to preserve the trees that were already standing, but have demonstrated a strong commitment to diversification of species, proper maintenance, and an emphasis on green space. If a developer wants to go see how to do it right — they should go visit Plein Air."

"We are proud to receive this award," Plein Air developer Campbell McCool said in a written statement. "It's nice that people recognize the effort we've made with trees. Jeff McManus and his design team have been involved since inception and we plan to keep planting for a long time to come."

The tree plan at Plein Air incorporates red maples, red rocket crepe myrtles, pin oaks, arbor vitae, drake elms, sugar maples, willow oaks and holly trees.

This award represents the first Oxford or Lafayette County developer to receive the Mississippi Urban Forest Council's Green Development Award.

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