

Powering up



MARIAN BALLARD/Colby Free Press
The strangers in bright T-shirts seen in alleys and backyards around town include Bob Howard of Texarkana, Texas, (right) and Alonso Noriega of Dallas, who were busy changing the electric meter at the Colby Free Press office this morning. Employees of contractor U.S. Bronco Service out of Ohio, they say it's cooler in Texas this summer than here.

Mowing adds more stress to lawns in hot weather

Sometimes good advice is a relief. "Be slow to mow during extremely hot weather. Mowing will simply add to your lawn's stress," said Rodney St. John, turfgrass specialist with K-State Research and Extension. Even warm-season Bermuda, zoysia and buffalograss lawns suffer when air temperatures reach the high 90s F and triple-digits, St. John warned. Unless cool-season turfs have entered summer dormancy, though, high temperatures can quickly create stress that has lawns struggling to survive. That's when irrigating is vital and mowing is about the last thing tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass need. "The good news is: Lawn grasses don't grow much in extreme hot weather," he said. "With luck, you can simply put off mowing until things cool off a bit."

"The upper 80s or lower 90s are the best point at which to resume your normal mowing schedule. Even then, however, you'd do well to set your mower at the high end of your turf's cutting-height range. Then, keep it high until fall arrives." The high end of warm-season turfs' recommended cutting range is about 2 inches, St. John said. Cool-season turfs' range peaks at 3.75 to 4 inches tall. No matter the turf or temperature, though, another bit of research-proven advice is to mow whenever lawns grow a third tall-

er than their recommended cutting height. "Removing much more leaf tissue than that can send turf into a kind of shock. Frequently cutting too much off can change a healthy lawn into thin, stemmy grass with a poor root system and space for weeds," he said. Mowing is a major lawn-management tool that affects turf health and performance, St. John added. Lawn owners can learn about its most effective uses at their Extension office or online at www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/hort2/MF1155.pdf.

Senior Progress Center

Menus for the week: **Monday:** fish sandwich, macaroni and cheese, cook's choice vegetable, bun, five-cup salad. **Tuesday:** turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, seasoned carrots, peaches. **Wednesday:** baked spaghetti, corn, mixed fruit with banana, garlic bread, brownie. **Thursday:** liver and onions in gravy, hash brown casserole, country-style tomatoes, rosy applesauce. **Friday:** Polish sausage with sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, bun, cottage cheese with fruit. The Thomas County Nutrition Center invites anyone 60 and older and guests to lunch Monday through Friday at the senior center. Home delivery is available, as is pick-up service. A contribution

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