



## Grounds & Landscape Committee Summer Update

- Committee met in April to discuss enhancing the front entry with a more striking landscape. Our plan is to add color and texture (all deer resistant), but keep some of the mature plants that are doing well. The Board also asked us to consider options to discourage large trucks from driving up onto the lawn and ruining it (which happens a lot). We presented options to the board for their review.
- In May we met with The Greenery to discuss upgrading the Clubhouse landscaping, primarily improvements to the front of the Clubhouse as that is the first impression people have of the area. The Greenery will come back with a preliminary plan. As these ideas mature, we will share them with the Clubhouse Committee. We will get a ballpark idea of what might be feasible budget-wise for this year and what we might need to build into a 5-year plan.
- Southern Tree trimmed the magnolias overhanging the pickle ball courts, along with a dead limb on a large oak tree on De La Gaye.
- Carmen Dillard and Alex Kent met with The Greenery to review landscape issues that need to be addressed.

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## Tips for Taking Care of Small Animals During Spring

- If a baby bird falls out of a nest go ahead and put it back in the nest or in a nearby bush. It is a myth that the mother will reject the bird. Do not feed it or give it water. If you touch the bird, you should wash your hands well to prevent the transfer of any diseases or parasites.
- If a baby squirrel drops out of a nest or seems to be missing his mother, give the mother squirrel a chance to reclaim the young and relocate it to a new nest. If the baby is uninjured, leave it where it is, leave the area, keep people and pets away, and monitor it from a safe distance.
- If an animal is injured, keep in mind we have a wildlife expert in the IOB who can help. For those who haven't met Dennis Dillard (also known as "Critter Man"), he can be contacted at (404) 664-4967. If Dennis is unable to help he is part of a group of rehabbers in Beaufort County and can refer you to someone. Also, Port Royal Animal Hospital will take in orphaned babies or injured animals.

(Our next newsletter will present more information on all the common animals in and around our neighborhood and debunk any myths about them.)

# What's So Great About Snakes?! And How Do We Live With Them?!

Its mid spring and summer is quickly approaching... which means snakes are coming out of Brumation, (hibernation for cold-blooded animals). Snakes strike fear in most people. A recent gallop poll showed people are afraid of snakes more than anything else. But snakes are equally afraid of us. Most snakes that people encounter are nonvenomous species and are completely harmless to people and pets. All snakes are valuable members of the food chain, serving as both predators and prey and can be indicators of a healthy environment.



*Photo courtesy VW Scheich*

*The Eastern King snake is a nonvenomous constrictor that feeds on snakes (including Copperheads and Rattlers), rodents, birds, lizards and even turtle eggs.*

Snakes eat all sorts of rodents and insects, and help keep our habitat in balance. Rodents are the primary transmitter of Lyme disease, which is rare in South Carolina. We have snakes to thank for that! Ticks become infected by feeding on small mammals, then transmit the bacteria to humans and other mammals. (Deer do not get Lyme disease and do not transfer it to ticks). The more rodents that snakes eat, the less carriers we have of Lyme disease.

Being carnivores, snakes keep the numbers of their prey down. Rodents reproduce exponentially in the absence of predators, as long as there's food. Snakes can slowly prowl to hunt, are able to enter burrows and tight spaces where other predators like cats or hawks can't go, and traps can't be set.

There are 38 snake species in South Carolina, only six of which are venomous. The venomous species tend to be secretive and are less frequently encountered. All snakes are nonaggressive when left alone. Below are the most common nonvenomous snakes you will find in our neighborhood, along with the **King** snake shown in photo above.



*The **Rat snake** is one of the longest snakes in the Southeast. They constrict the small mammals they feed upon.*



*The intricately patterned **Corn snake** is considered one of the world's most beautiful snakes. They frequent corn fields and grain stores for mice,*

*rats & quails. Sometimes mistaken for a Copperhead.*



*The **Green snake** is camouflaged and hard to spot in the forest. Eats insects and spiders.*



*Found in wooded areas and thickets, the sleek **Black Racer** likes to eat smaller snakes, rodents, amphibians, insects, lizards. **All of these snakes are harmless if left alone.***

## What's So Great About Snakes?! (Continued)

The most common venomous snake here is the Copperhead snake, usually less than 3-1/2' long. This snake has light to dark brown or grey background with darker brown hourglass or saddleback shapes across back and a solid-colored "copper" head. The Copperhead has the mildest venom.

The risk of a venomous snakebite in the US is very low. Snakes only account for 5-6 deaths each year. (Bee and wasp stings and dog attacks account for most animal-related deaths.) Most accidents happen at home with captive pets and in backyard encounters. In fact, the majority of wild bites occur when the person is attempting to harass, kill or handle the snake. White males and young adults (18-28 years old) are the most frequently bitten demographic (often alcohol is involved). If you take precautions you can greatly reduce the threat of being bitten. If you do get bit by a venomous snake, have someone drive you to the hospital. If your dog is bitten, call your vet. You should never try to kill a Copperhead, or any snake. Call a wildlife officer if necessary.

See article below, found recently in the Beaufort Gazette re Copperheads in your yard. (Note, many snake experts say repellents are not very effective, instead use other methods for keeping snakes at bay.) For more information on snakes in SC follow these links:

<https://www.hiltonheadmonthly.com/living/nature/3171-lowcountry-snakes> (Herpetologist Tony Mills)

<http://srelherp.uga.edu/snakes/snake-safety.htm> (Snake Safety)

### 5 ways to keep SC copperheads out of your yard this spring

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With South Carolina deep into spring and closing in on summer, copperheads are out in force.

The most common venomous snake in South Carolina, the copperhead, while it prefers to avoid human contact, can often be found in yards and gardens, which can cause problems for homeowners. However, there are steps you can take to keep the scaly creatures out of your yard and away from your home.

#### HOW TO IDENTIFY A COPPERHEAD

While keeping copperheads away is the goal, should one happen to slither into your yard, it's important to know what you're dealing with before you, your pet or your child have an unfortunate encounter.

The copperhead gets its name from the copper-tan color on its head and on parts of its body, Clemson Cooperative Extension states. Copperheads have triangular-shaped heads, similar to an arrowhead and can grow up to 4 feet long.



Photo courtesy WUNC

Copperheads also feature an hourglass-shaped pattern on their bodies — from the head down to the tail. When curled up, this camouflage can make them look like a pile of leaves. And like most other venomous snakes in South Carolina, copperheads have yellow eyes with black vertical and elliptical pupils.

#### REMOVE COPPERHEAD HABITAT

Copperheads prefer to hide in dense vegetation, leaf piles and other cluttered areas. Clearing out these hiding spots from your yard can help reduce the chances of copperheads taking up residence in your yard, according to

Forest Wildlife. Also, keeping your yard's grass and bushes regularly trimmed will make the area less appealing to copperheads by reducing the amount of cover they can use.

#### SEAL OFF YARD ENTRY POINTS

Snakes can enter your yard through small gaps and openings, like holes in your fence or gaps under your doors. Seal off any potential entry points to keep copperheads out of your yard.

#### USE SNAKE REPELLENTS

There are various types of snake repellents available for sale. Some of

these products emit a scent that snakes find unpleasant, while others use vibrations or sounds to scare them away.

Homeowners can also use vinegar and ammonia as a homemade repellent. However, you should not combine the two. Instead, pick one and spray it around areas of your yard or house, Forest Wildlife states.

And according to Home & Gardens, you can deter snakes with certain snake repellent plants, including marigolds, allium, lemon-grass, mother-in-law's tongue, garlic, wormwood, basil and yellow alder.

#### USE PHYSICAL BARRIERS

Installing physical barriers such as snake-proof fencing can help keep copperheads out of your yard. This type of fencing is specially designed to prevent snakes from entering a property.

#### BE MINDFUL OF COPPERHEAD FOOD SOURCES

Copperheads enjoy munching on rodents, frogs, lizards and insects, the S.C. Department of Natural Resources states. Take steps to reduce these food sources in your yard.

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The Gardening & Landscape Committee hopes y'all have a wonderful spring and summer. Not too hot, not too wet, and just the right amount of family fun.

Resources for this newsletter include: [SCDNF Wildlife](#), [EatStayPlayBeaufort-Lowcountry Life](#), [HiltonHeadMonthly](#), [Low Country Institute](#), [Savannah River Ecology Laboratory](#), [newsgallop.com](#)