

LakeRidge Falls

4200 LakeRidge Blvd.
Sarasota, FL 34243

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Here are the more important stories we had this past and upcoming weeks:

Yard Waste Pickup – LakeRidge Falls is considered a maintenance-free community. As such, it contracts with a landscaping maintenance company, i.e. West Bay Landscape, for the care of all accessible lawns and plantings in the areas of initially installed landscaping. Nevertheless, homeowners have the right to plant additional plantings on the side and/or back of their properties as-long-as they obtain approval from the Architectural Review Board (ARB). If such approval is granted, these homeowners are responsible for year-round maintenance of all added plantings i.e. trees, shrubs, and planted beds of flowers or grasses. As one can imagine, part of this responsibility involves the disposal of yard waste. These homeowners use mainly two methods for disposing of yard waste. They pay their private landscape companies to haul away the debris or take advantage of Manatee County’s free yard waste pickup service.

In regards to the second method, Manatee County’s yard waste pickup policy defines yard waste as “vegetative matter resulting from yard and landscaping maintenance of your own property. This includes materials such as tree branches, leaves, grass clippings or palm fronds.” The policy then describes how residents should prepare yard waste for pickup. Here are the three acceptable methods based on Manatee County:

Bag It: You can use sturdy garbage bags.

Can It: Please put yard waste in a 32-gallon garbage cans. Yard waste should not extend above the top of the can. Bundles, bags or 32-gallon garbage cans should weigh no more than 50 pounds each.

Bundle It: If you do not wish to use garbage cans or garbage bags, you can put yard waste in bundles no longer than four (4) feet in length. Bundles cannot contain branches larger than six (6) inches in diameter. Any branch larger than six (6) inches in diameter should be cut in half length-wise, tied and bundled. Tie bundles with heavy-duty string.

The policy then goes to advise residents to “please prepare yard waste properly to expedite pickup” and states that all “properly prepared yard waste is picked up on Wednesday except for holiday make-up schedules” which is then pushed to Thursday.

Manatee County’s policy concludes by explaining that there “is no limit on the amount of yard waste that can be picked up, as long as it is bundled, bagged or canned and placed out properly. The removal of large amounts of loose yard waste is not part of the residential collection service charge, and is considered an “Extraordinary Service.” If you choose to have the hauler pick up your loose yard waste, please call customer service at 941-792-8811 to arrange a pickup. This Extraordinary Service will be charged on your next utility bill. Residents may also elect to take the debris to the Lena Road Landfill in their own vehicle.”

Why are we bringing this issue up? Well, a picture that was taken on Monday can summarize it best:



In the example above, a homeowner failed to follow Manatee County's yard waste policy. While some may feel this is not and should not be a big deal, we ask that you take a moment to understand the impact it has on the community as a whole.

Waste Management, a subcontractor for Manatee County that is responsible for the pickup of yard waste, would not pick up such piles. Therefore, these piles would stay on the curbside for a couple of days. At this point, West Bay Landscape Foreman, Mr. Chris Clammer, and Weed Tech, Mrs. Rocio Madrigal, take it upon themselves to pick up the piles Waste Management left behind. Of course, we can only praise these two individuals for their initiative and care. However, the financial burden of disposing of the extra yard waste now falls on West Bay instead of Manatee County. As one can guess, it would be up to the Association to reimburse West Bay for these additional costs. Would it be fair for a neighbor to pay for a fellow neighbor's yard waste removal? Of course not.

We, therefore, are asking that you please follow the policy set by Manatee County. Please be advised that West Bay was directed not to pick up piles that were not picked up by Waste Management because they were not properly prepared. We truly believe that a little bit more self-awareness can go a long way in solving this matter. Thank you in advance for your attention and assistance on this issue.

Rule Violation – On a related issue, the pile in the picture above was left on the grassy curbside on Monday of this week. Yard waste pickup, as mentioned before, is Wednesday. As such, it is a clear violation of Lakeridge Falls Documents, Initial Restrictions and Rules, 2. Restricted Activities, paragraph (j). Besides being unsightly to fellow neighbors, this condition also interferes with the day-to-day operations of the Association, especially during mowing days. When placing your garbage or yard waste on the grass during a mowing day, a lawnmower operator faces three options: 1) mow the section, assuming the pile is small, and hope it would not make too much of a mess, 2) get off the lawnmower, move the pile or garbage can aside, get back on the lawnmower, mow the section of grass, and maybe, depends on the person, reposition the items back to their original place, and 3) skip this section altogether.

Of course, the first option is a no go. The second option is feasible but creates delays and interrupts the flow of work. The last option is the most logical one but also the one that leaves many residents unhappy. So you see, there is no good outcome of leaving garbage or yard waste on the grassy curbside outside the designated time frame. Therefore, we ask that you please 1) make sure to leave your garbage in a can on the driveway apron, 2) make sure not to accumulate yard waste or leave garbage except between regular garbage pickup times, and 3) follow Manatee County's yard waste pickup policy. The Association can utilize enforcement to ensure this issue is resolved. However, we are more than sure that your attention and assistance on this issue will be all that is needed to rectify this situation. Again, thank you in advance for your cooperation in keeping LakeRidge Falls a beautiful and clean place to live in.

Trespassing – On Tuesday morning, we received reports that a male trespasser jumped over the fenced wall off of Lockwood Ridge. The report stated that this person allegedly attempted to gain access to some homes along Victoria Falls Circle and asked several residents if he can “borrow” their vehicles. Manatee County Sheriff Office’s Deputies who were dispatched on site were able to apprehend the suspect and took him to custody. Thankfully, no one got hurt and nothing was stolen that we are aware of. Besides the negative impact it had, this incident also serves as a valuable reminder of what should be done in similar situations.

Some residents called the gatehouse asking Mr. Scott Stillwell, the gatehouse captain, to call the Sheriff Office to report the incident. Following LakeRidge’s Post Orders, Mr. Stillwell advised residents they must call 911 immediately. As some may guess, some were unhappy with this response. Now, this is not to say that the gatehouse would not report similar matters to the Sheriff Office when asked to do so or when they witness a criminal activity firsthand. However, the main responsibility is of the eyewitness of the incident. Please understand that calling the gatehouse may delay the Sheriff Office’s response time and may create confusion. After all, it is a lot to expect a gatehouse attendee, who is not a trained dispatcher, to write down a report from a person whose heartbeat and blood pressure are off the charts and then convey this report to a 911 operator. Therefore, we ask that you please report potential criminal activities to the Manatee County Sheriff Office directly before reporting them to the gatehouse. We wish to thank you in advance for help on this matter and together we can keep LakeRidge Falls a safe place to live.

Bulletin Board – With the temporary office gone, several residents asked where the new bulletin board is now located. So, please note it is located now at the back entrance to the clubhouse, which is the one facing the pool.

Have a great and a safe weekend.

Sincerely,

Oded Neeman - CAM
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