



# *The Cottages*



Newsletter  
Winter 2021



Kiki Scovel  
President

## President's Letter

### Season Greetings,

*I would like to take the opportunity to wish each of you a very happy holiday season. I hope you have enjoyed the beautiful lights and decorations around our community. I love them.*

*This is the season of giving. There are many worthy charities to choose from in our area and there are many ways to give whether it be giving of your time, money, or tangible items. It all serves our community and is appreciated.*

*Residents are always interested in the overall look of the street and the Board is continuing its efforts to improve our neighborhood. Later in the newsletter you can read some important information we learned during a recent professional agronomist's visit to The Cottages. I urge you to read his recommendations and make whatever landscape improvements and additions may be needed to keep your yard looking its best. Thanks to those of you who have already taken action!*

*Our next HOA meeting is January 12, 2022 at the Pelican Landing Community Center. Barring Covid issues, our annual meeting will be held on February 9, 2022 at 5:00 PM at PLCC with the option to attend via Zoom.*

*Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukah  
& Happy New Year to everyone! Kiki*

# Growing grass problem?

## Thatch buildup!

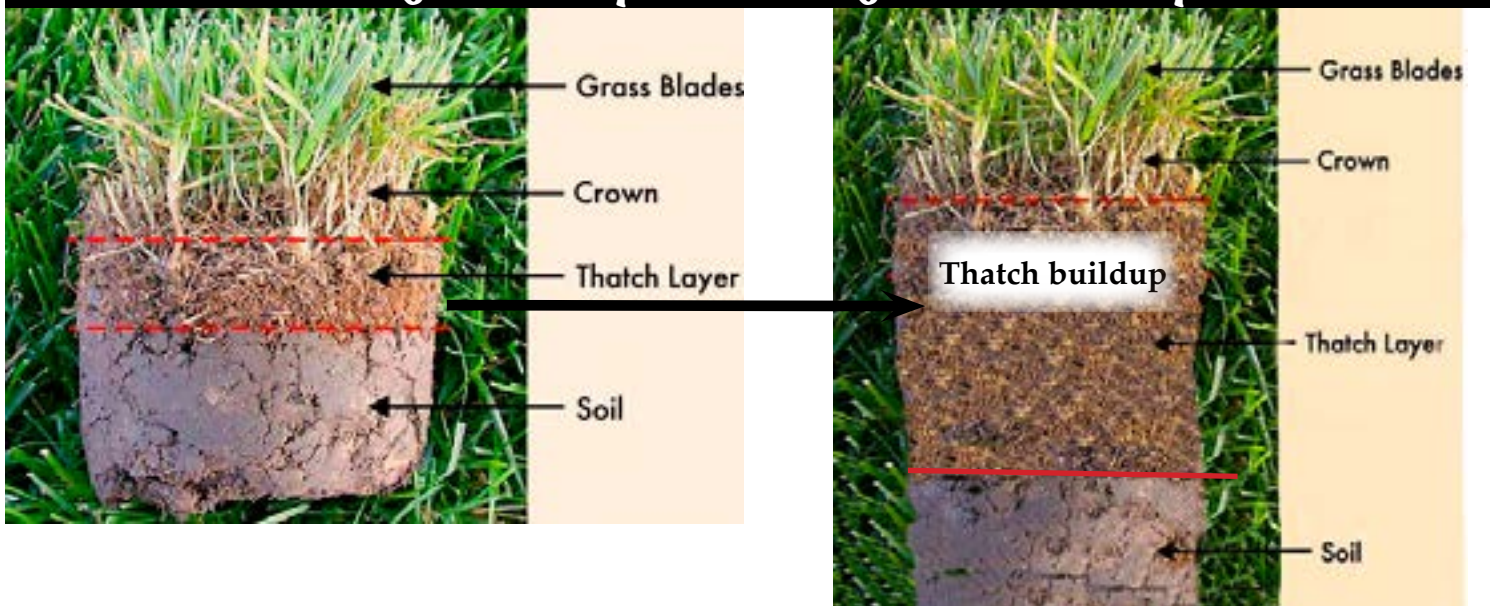
Growing grass in The Cottages is a constant challenge. Recently a resident arranged for board members to meet with a professional agronomist. We toured The Cottages and the agronomist made an assessment and recommendations.

According to the agronomist, the primary problem with growing lawns in The Cottages is that over the past 25 years the lawns have built up a layer of thatch that is at least 6” thick. Core samples of several lawns showed this thatch build up. Thatch buildup is common and not preventable. The thatch layer must be removed before new sod is put down. In addition, oak tree roots compete with our lawns for water and space.

The recommended variety of grass that is suitable for our shady lane and can stay looking good with the two watering days allowed by the CDD per week, is St. Augustine var. Palmetto or Floratam. Zoysia grass was not agronomist recommended grass for The Cottages. Unless the homeowner can provide 3-4 waterings per week, Zoysia will “smoke” i.e. have yellow dormant spots or go totally dormant throughout the dry season. The agronomist best practices recommendations are included in this newsletter. For more information or for an email version, please contact Kiki at [cgscovel@gmail.com](mailto:cgscovel@gmail.com)

A printable handout of agronomist recommendations is included in this newsletter. For more information or for an email version of the handout, please contact Kiki at [cgscovel@gmail.com](mailto:cgscovel@gmail.com)

### Core grass samples showing thatch buildup



# *Agronomist Best Practices & Recommendations for Successful Lawns*

- Before work starts landscaper should call 811 (Utility Locates). They will mark BSU and FPL lines at no charge.
- Dan Geist will need to locate irrigation lines.
- Notify the Cottages HOA for extra irrigation on the new lawn.

1. Dig out and remove the thatch layer and surface roots, approx. 6-8" to natural soil level. A core soil sample will show how much thatch needs to be removed.
2. Large tree roots should be cut and removed.
3. Add several inches of new soil as required and some micro-nutrients.
4. Sod strips at least 3-4 feet wide allows the sod to sustain itself.
5. Install so the top edge of the new sod is level with the street curb.
6. Install sod up to shrub edges; sod edges should be curved.

## *Agronomist Recommended Grass Varieties*

1. St. Augustine var. Floratam or Palmetto are recommended. St. Augustine is cut 4" high.
2. Zoysia grass (not recommended) requires extra watering by the homeowner in dry months. Zoysia is cut 2" high.



Excerpts from Town Hall presentation reviewing *highlights* of the Cottages Covenants and Bylaws pertaining to responsibilities

## *Owner Responsibilities*

### *Lawn and Landscape Overview*

*In general – Owner maintains all aspects of the yard in good, clean, neat and attractive condition*

- Owners can use any landscape contractor for yard improvements
- Owners are required to use the HOA contracted irrigation specialist because irrigation is one interconnected system
- DRC approval process is required for major re-landscaping

## *Owner Responsibilities*

### *Lawn and Landscape*

- ✓ Repair and replacement of all landscape to include sod, shrubs, flowers, trees
- ✓ Bare areas must be re-planted
- ✓ Maintenance of specialty plantings such as rose gardens & butterfly gardens

*Arrangements for maintenance of specialty gardens may be made between the Owner and the landscape contractor and billed directly to the owner*

*Click the link below to access the Covenants update on the Cottages website. Go to **Article VIII, Section 8.1** for the full detail on Owner and HOA responsibilities.*

[https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/9cb183ab-2439-4e6a-a440-f6be5580b002/downloads/Certificate%20of%20Recordation%205.10.21\(16671705\\_1\).PDF?ver=1620741751155](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/9cb183ab-2439-4e6a-a440-f6be5580b002/downloads/Certificate%20of%20Recordation%205.10.21(16671705_1).PDF?ver=1620741751155)



# *Entry Landscaping completed*

The flagpole entry landscaping has been enhanced. Green Acres installed additional plants, stones and new sod. The total amount of grass has been reduced.



Steve Kubicsek





## *Fall landscaping*

**G**reen Acres has applied mulch to the fronts of the Cottages homes as needed and Soto Tree Service has trimmed our palms.





Kiki Scovel  
Webmaster

# *Cottages Web News*

<https://cottagespl.org>

Click this link

What are *YOU* looking for...

- Roof Tile Specs
- DRC Form
- Cottages Contract Vendors
- Irrigation Schedules
- Lawn Maintenance Details
- HOA Documents
- Board Minutes
- Newsletters

A close-up photograph of a bald eagle's head, showing its white feathers, yellow beak, and dark eye. The eagle is looking slightly to the left. The background is a soft-focus green field.

*The Cottages website has all this and more.*



# Finances



Paul Barnicke  
Treasurer

We have a balance of \$67,000 in our operating account at the end of October 2021 which is an increase from the end of August where the balance was \$51,000.

Much of this increase is because certain costs for landscaping, palm tree trimming, and mulch have yet to be incurred or paid as at October 31. Thus, I'm anticipating that by end of the year we will have a healthy amount in our operating account of around \$50,000. There has been no change in our reserve accounts from my last report. The cost of the new landscaping in front of the gazebo was \$2,800.

Your board approved our 2022 budget which includes an increase in our quarterly dues from \$840 to \$865 effective for Q1 of 2022. The full budget will be presented at our upcoming AGM and you should get a copy in the mailer for the meeting.

# *Planning significant digging? Call 811*

All locates are handled by dialing 811 and let them know where you are doing work and they then send out the locate request to ALL utilities.



Lisa Karnow  
Customer Service Manager BSU  
11900 E Terry St  
Bonita Springs FL 34135  
239-992-0711 (main)  
www.bsu.us

## Maintenance News



Dennis Lowe  
Secretary/Maintenance

### *Gazebo gets a bath*



Paul Barnicke fired up his power washer and cleaned the Gazebo entry pavers and the Gazebo beams saving the Cottages about \$300.





## *New Gazebo benches*

Two new Gazebo benches were installed at the Gazebo. The wood on the old benches was rotting. Kiki Scovel procured the benches, Dennis Lowe put them together and Paul Barnicke installed brackets to hold them in place.



# Stop signs

Cal & Kiki Scovel took on a project to clean and paint the three stop signs on Olde Cottage Lane. The stop signs were very dirty and rusted. The painted signs have been restored to their original colors.



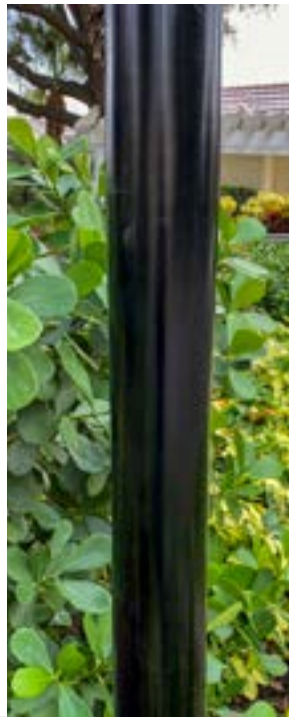
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## *Streetlight replaced*

Florida Power & Light has finally replaced a deteriorating light pole near the flagpole. Kiki Scovel had been contacting FPL for over a year to replace the worn pole.





## Around the Neighborhood

### *Last roof replaced*

**B**ob and Allie Jacobson's roof at 3699 has been completed. This is the last roof "scheduled" at this time for the Cottages. There are several roofs that will not be replaced in the near future. Our road will be sealed in the May 2022 timeframe so there should not be any more 5-axle trailers carrying roof tiles to tear up the freshly sealed road.



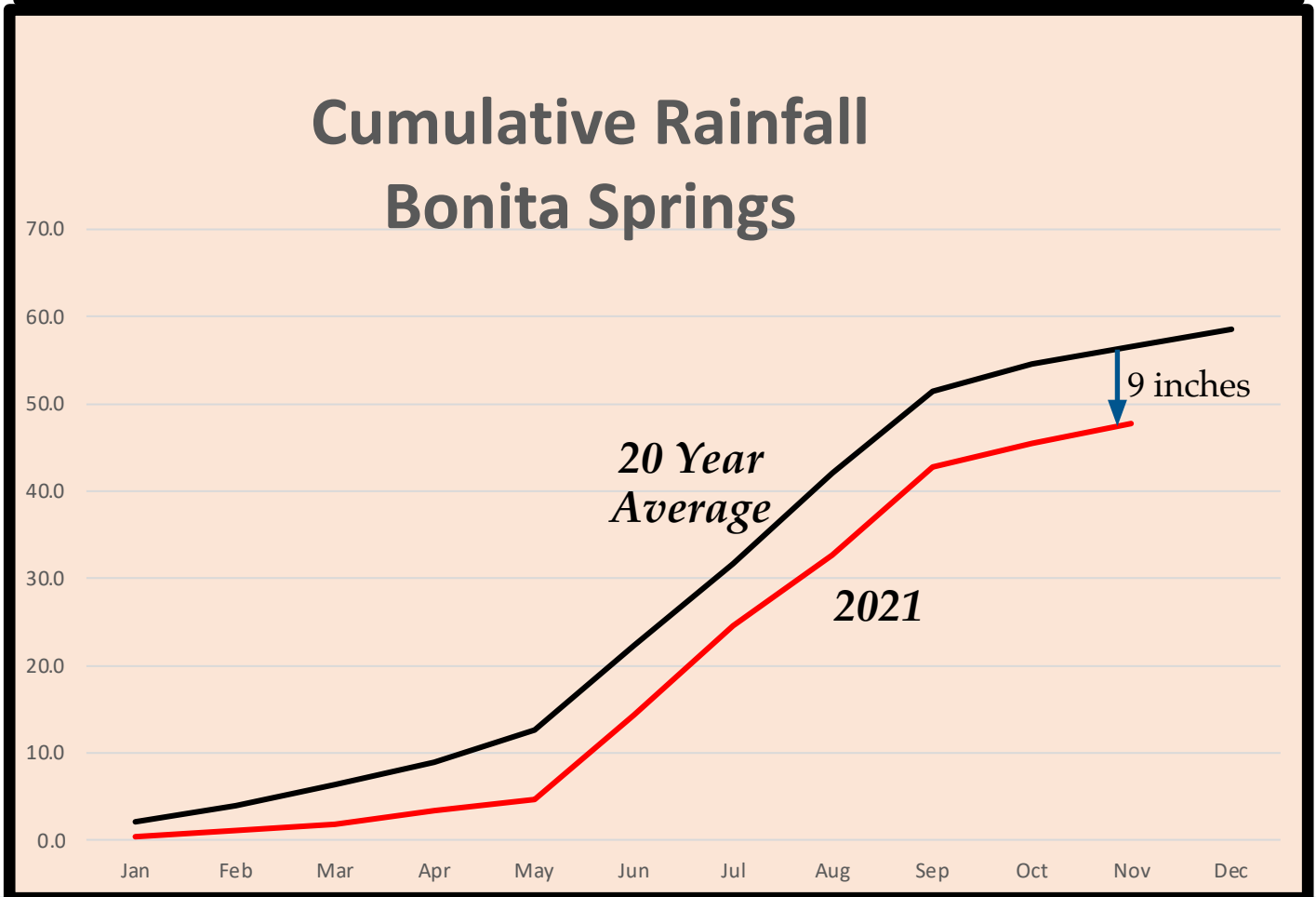
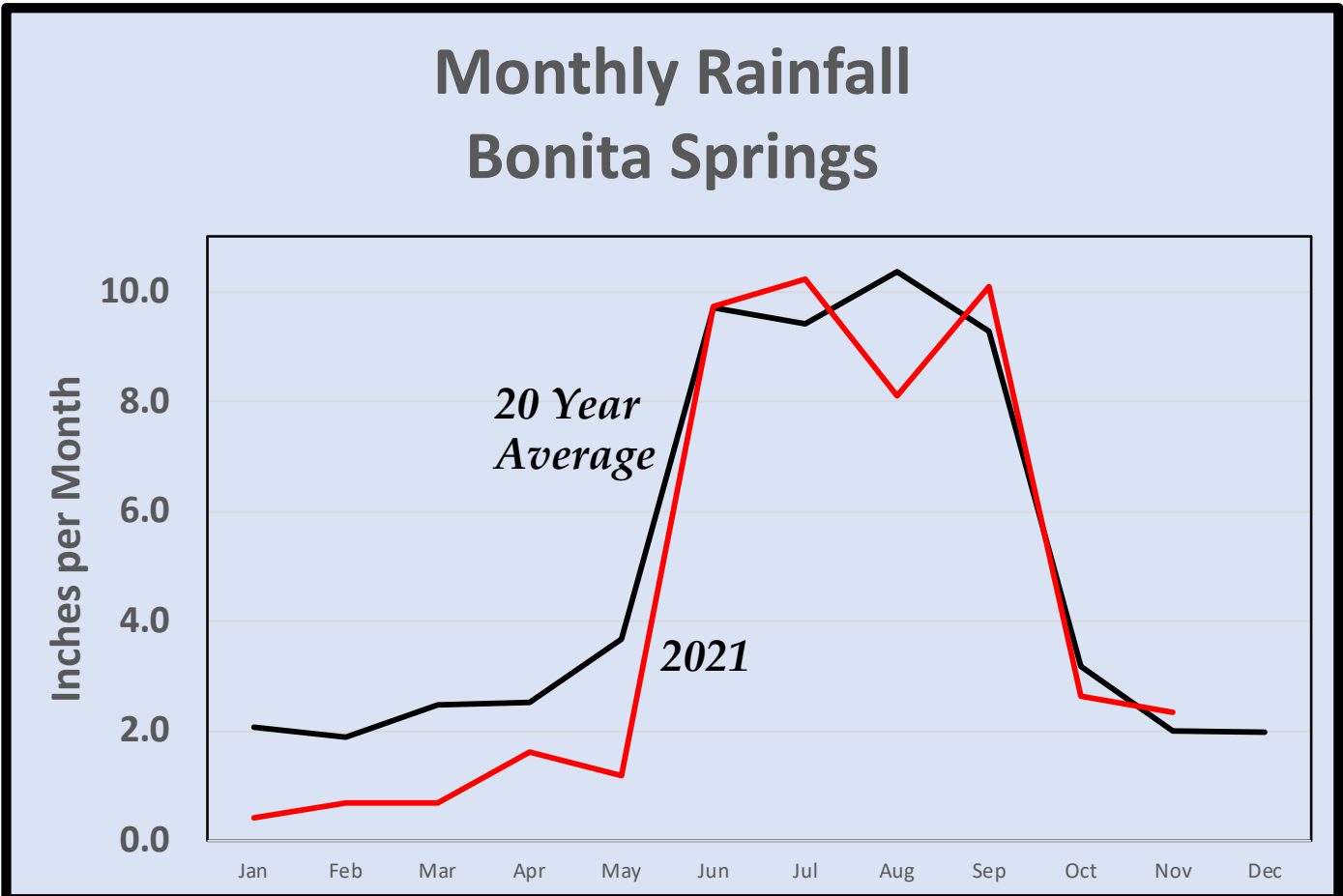


# *New Xmas Wreaths*

*Marta Sweitzer and Kiki Scovel put up new wreaths at the Cottages entrance.*



# Rainfall 9" below 20-year average





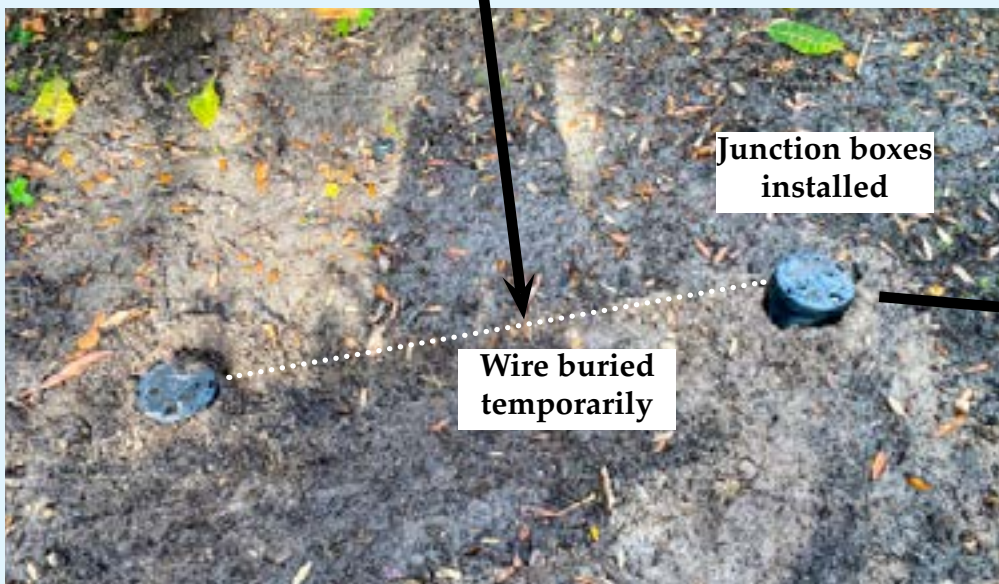
# Mystery solved?

For the past several years the breaker for the Gazebo kept tripping off due to an electrical short. Several attempts at finding the break were unsuccessful. West Coast Electric (Ryan) finally discovered the break (shown in the photos below) . This fix is only temporary and the wire running from the breaker box out to the lighting timer area will need to be buried in steel-clad wire to resist cuts to prevent future cuts.



Exposed wire had been cut

Wire cut may have been during a tree removal



Junction boxes installed

Wire buried temporarily





# Fall Social

The November 16th Social was a great success with 28 residents attending. Great food, perfect weather and lots of good conversation.



# Cottages Board



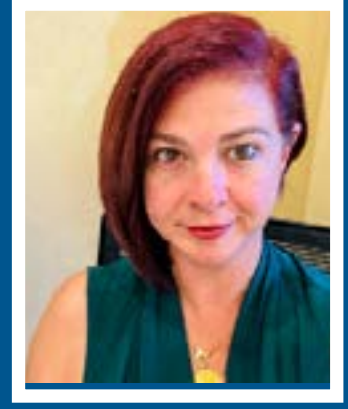
Kiki Scovel  
President /  
Landscaping /  
Website



Paul Barnicke  
Treasurer



Dennis Lowe  
Secretary /  
Maintenance /  
Newsletter



Tabettha Robinson  
Property Manager



Luckily we do not have to shovel heat!

Happy Winter!