

Tips offered to prevent vandals

By Doug Funke
staff writer

Protecting property from vandals isn't necessarily an easy task, but steps can be taken to lessen your chances of becoming such a crime victim, police say.

Recommendations were sought following assertions by Troy police that damages resulting from malicious destruction of property topped the \$100,000 mark through the first four months of this year.

"We can stress residential lighting during hours of darkness so as to illuminate persons who may be involved in this type of activity," said Officer Philip Steele of the crime prevention bureau.

"Neighborhood watch and neighborhood security patrol help to deter the type of activity," he added. "Often times, those people involved live in or near subdivisions where vandalism takes place."

"The name of the game is for res-

idents to be observant and when they see this activity taking place or about to take place, call the police department immediately," Steele said. "Report all suspicious activity."

IF POSSIBLE, park cars in garages or driveways rather than on the street. Consider walking down your street occasionally so you can recognize persons in the neighborhood and they you. Patterns of comings and goings can usually be perceived through front-porch sitting.

"The other key is parental involvement and responsibility for their children," Steele said. "Parents should be aware of where their children are and what they're doing when they're away from home."

Persons who want more information about neighborhood watch or crime prevention are asked to contact Steele at 524-3448.

Troy police said Monday that some recent media accounts overestimated the connection between teen involvement

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— Philip Steele
crime prevention bureau

in para-military-type groups and vandalism in the city.

Troy police last week announced that several small groups of juveniles may have been responsible for rashes of vandalism since school began last fall.

"IN TERMS of the big picture, activity of these groups is very small," Lt. John Knechtges said Monday. "Our concern is that these groups exist in the first place."

"We've had a problem, obviously,

with this sort of thing (vandalism)," Knechtges added. "While it has slowed down, it hasn't gone away."

"What we were trying to do is make a statement saying we are aware these groups exist, we want them to know we know they exist, and we will continue to investigate them and we will do whatever we can to stop their activity," he said.

Capt. Glenn Dunn told the city council Monday that as far as Troy police were aware, two such groups had a combined involvement of no more than 10 persons.

Only four young people so far have been arrested — three for malicious destruction of property in a single incident at one location in Troy.

Police say they believe the three belong to an organized group called the Jesters of Troy, but don't know for certain whether that affiliation was the motivation for the specific attack, said Sgt. Richard Hay, supervisor of the juvenile unit.

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How to have a beautiful lawn this season

Professional help can pave the way to a picture-book lawn. But, whether you let the pro do it, or do it yourself, the route to a beautiful lawn is the same.

Grass type, mowing, watering, fertilization, and control of weeds, insects and disease are basics for a healthy lawn. None should be neglected.

Don't underestimate the importance of choosing the type grass best suited for your geographical location, climate, soil type and special needs. Sale of grass seed is a very sophisticated industry, with over 120 million pounds of seed sold annually. Types of seed available are tremendously varied.

Best of all, grass seed is economical and one of the least expensive things your lawn will require. A smart decision on grass type will save you time, money and trouble on the other basics. Don't take mowing lightly, either. Blades should be set high enough to prevent scalping. If the sun can dry roots, your lawn will suffer and show it. Keep blades sharp so the mower cuts instead of chews.

Most experts agree that clippings should not be removed. Clippings do not contribute to thatch build-up, however, if large clumps remain after mowing, these should be removed. Soil should be moist and the lawn dry for best mowing results in hot weather.

YOUR LAWN probably needs more water than you give it. Without rain, an inch of water once a week is needed. The soil should be moistened to a depth of six inches to promote deep rooting.

If you question the need for fertilizer — don't. Lawns should receive a high nitrogen fertilizer two or three times annually. Soil testing will determine your lawn's need for fertilizer nutrients as well as lime to correct an acid soil.

There are several types of soil-testing kits on the market that enable homeowners to test soil fertility themselves. These kits are usually available in lawn and garden stores and are relatively simple to use. These home kits, however, are not as accurate as having your soil tested by a professional lawn care company or state university laboratory.

Proper identification of weeds, insects and certain diseases is essential

for effective control. It is almost inevitable that some of these problems will require countermeasures at some point in time. Failure to match the correct pest with the proper control material is throwing money away and likely guarantees a ragged lawn.

Unfortunately, it is not always easy to sort out and identify different weeds, insects and diseases. In fact, effective control is often easier than accurately identifying the problem.

The only sure route to take in identifying these pests is to carefully monitor your lawn, learn about common pests or seek qualified, professional advice.

An increasing number of lawn owners in the U.S. are doing just that — seeking out advice and aid from professional lawn care companies.

A qualified lawn care service offers the work of professionals trained in chemical and fertilizer application,

choice of materials and identification of key problems confronting your lawn. Besides taking care of problems effectively, these companies are fast becoming the ultimate short-cut to an attractive lawn for a growing number of homeowners. Professional lawn care can be a real time-saver for working couples and other people with limited leisure time, men and women involved in sports on the weekends, people who travel, and those people who are handicapped or incapacitated.

Doggedly factual

Here are some interesting facts about humans' favorite companion, the dog:

- The Tahitian bear dog is the rarest breed of dog, with only five known examples surviving. The dogs were formerly used for hunting big game by the Tahitians Indians of western Canada.
- The Yorkshire terrier, the Chihuahua and the toy poodle are the smallest breeds of dog. Miniature versions have been known to weigh less than 16 ounces in adulthood.

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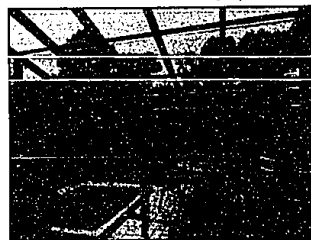
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