

LOCAL BRIEFS

Ithaca wants residents to conserve water

The City of Ithaca is asking residents to voluntarily conserve water and limit unnecessary water usage during the next three weeks.

According to a news release sent by the city on Wednesday evening, the city will be relying, almost completely, on water from neighboring water systems of Bolton Point and Cornell University during this phase of the Water Treatment Plant construction project.

Both Bolton Point and Cornell will continue to supply their own customers in addition to the City of Ithaca, the release stated, so residents are asked to conserve.

Questions regarding the request can be forwarded to the Water &

Sewer Division at (607) 272-1717.

New York state education chief to visit Ithaca Friday

New York State Education Department Commissioner MaryEllen Elia will visit the Ithaca City School District Friday and tour Northeast Elementary School.

The school was recognized as a New York State Reward School in August for its consistent excellence in student achievement, according to a news release from the school district.

On Thursday, Elia is slated to meet with district superintendents and school board members. She is also scheduled to meet with administrators, teachers and selected parents.

Future

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to be kept at temperatures as cold as liquid nitrogen, a temperature of nearly 200 degrees below zero Celsius (minus-321 degrees Fahrenheit).

Once the material used to create a superconductor gets below a certain temperature, it turns from a normal metal to a superconducting metal.

This creates a number of properties in the metal that, when active, will “pin” the metal to the magnetic field around the magnet, creating a phenomenon called quantum levitation.

The applications, though intriguing, aren’t necessarily for DeLoreans or hoverboards.

For Sullivan’s demonstrations, objects float just as long as they can stay cold enough, but with no friction or energy to expend, in theory, the objects could go on floating forever.

For the practical applications of supercon-

ductors, the number of uses are many, and the technology is growing more sophisticated by the year.

For example, the inside of every MRI machine is a superconductor cooled with liquid helium. Superconductors are used to carry currents in the high-capacity power systems of large cities, in transportation systems and, hopefully one day, to create a more efficient means of generating power.

The key to a real breakthrough, Sullivan said, is creating a superconductor that can operate at room temperature.

“If we could find those, the uses would be quite numerous,” Sullivan said. “We would have a revolution in the way electronics are run. Everything now run through copper wires would be carried through superconducting wires. There would be no energy lost from the power plant to your home, no need for step-up transformers, which we use to minimize power losses.”

Hopeful

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downtown, different from Southside and very different from the sleepy neighborhood south of the creek,” Nguyen said. “Most of those areas are quiet, residential areas with many old houses and beautiful architecture, and that’s something we want to protect along with the sense of community each of these neighborhoods have. At the same time, we need our urban core to stay healthy and vibrant.”

One of Nguyen’s key issues is community/police relations. Nguyen praised Ithaca Police Chief John Barber’s efforts toward engaging with the community. He

does see potential to do better and said he would support further efforts, including the introduction of new programming, like a social worker to assist police on the job.

Nguyen also spoke about the prevalence of drug use and sales and drug paraphernalia in city parks. He said a need exists for compassionate ways to treat and help users instead of pushing them from one location to another. Nguyen also said redirecting low-level offenders to community service instead of incarceration could be a solution.

“They could take the burden of dealing with mental health issues away from police officers,” Nguyen said.

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ASK A GARDENER

Landscape may look a little tattered in autumn

PAT CURRAN
CORRESPONDENT

Question: Some plants don’t look very good right now. Is there anything I can do?

Answer: The accumulated stresses of the growing season may not be noticed by busy home gardeners until fall. This year, we had lots of rain earlier in the summer, which is conducive to many fungus diseases. Then we had a dry spell, long enough to stress drought-sensitive plants such as maples.

Home gardeners busy with vacations didn’t necessarily realize just how long the dry spell persisted, so spring-planted woody landscape plants suffered. Supple-

mental water (about 10 or 15 gallons every week that we don’t receive an inch of rain, until the ground freezes) would have helped. A couple inches of mulch (not touching the trunk) will help keep the soil moist and the weeds down.

Most of us have now received 2 or 3 inches of rain. We are hoping to continue getting enough moisture before winter. Snow cover is good protection when we have it — but when we don’t, the frozen ground no longer supplies moisture to woody plants.

This ‘cold drought’ can cause branch dieback in woodies, and both branch dieback and browned leaves in evergreens. Before deciding

to prune branches that have lost their leaves, scratch the bark with your fingernail and look for green underneath. If you see green under the bark, dormant buds will eventually develop into leaves and shoots, so don’t prune yet.

However, many fall conditions are mostly cosmetic — leaves are disfigured, but the plants have already made enough food through photosynthesis. For example, tall lilacs get mildew most years. By the time your home gardener notices it, there is no remedy, but no permanent damage either.

Fall webworms are not a threat to tree health, for two reasons. First, there are usually

not too many webs, but even more important, insect feeding late in the growing season has less impact on the trees.

In general, healthy trees have about twice as much leaf surface area as they need for photosynthesis, so the loss of some leaves in late summer and early fall is not a problem.

For more information, sign up for the class “Getting Your Landscape Ready for Winter,” which will be held on Oct. 22 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

For answers to other garden, lawn, landscape and pest questions, call Cooperative Extension at 607-272-2292 or email: growline1@gmail.com.

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