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“The urge to beauty and the need for beautiful and gracious and lovely things in life is as vital a need as the urge for bread” - Luther Burbank

Tree Care 101

By Jeff Rebuschung, Fine tree Care

We like to have trees around us because they make life pleasant. Trees are more than beautiful. They provide a multitude of environmental benefits and serve a variety of practical functions as well. Most importantly I think, the quiet strength and endurance of trees impart a sense of serenity, bring peace, and instill tranquility within our lives. In the years I have spent working professionally with trees, I have grown a deep sense of admiration for the perseverance trees demonstrate when they make the most of any chance to grow and prosper despite an often adverse environment.

Perhaps it is their slow growth and potential for such long life that make trees such a fixture in everyone's lives; they literally span generations. Even though they are commonly considered private property, many trees are part of our local and even our global community as well. In my experience, we acknowledge and share in the consensus that trees are a valuable and beneficial part of our environment; they deserve our best long term care and planning.

A well cared for tree that remains healthy increases in value with age. Mature trees beautify our yards and communities, purify the air, provide shading in the summer (which can help with the cooling bills), and shelter our homes from winter winds. They can even increase property values.

Prevention...

A preventative care program can ensure the value of your trees will continue to grow over time because preventing a problem is less costly and time consuming than providing a cure years after a problem has developed.

A maintenance program including regular inspections and the necessary follow-up care of mulching, fertilizing, pruning, end stage care, and eventual removal of trees, can identify problems and correct them before they become more damaging, fatal to the tree, cause property damage, or worse.



Mistletoe parasite

Inspection...

A tree inspection is the process of evaluating the health, vigor, and structural development of a tree while calling attention to any changes in the trees health before a serious problem can develop.

First, the tree is evaluated for general signs of poor health, such as trunk defects or decay, damaged branches, loose bark, or deformed growths such as mushrooms and conks. Major defects caused by construction damage, storm damage, improper pruning, and progression of uncompartimentalized rot may lead to tree failure without corrective action. Any abnormalities, defects, insect activity, or deformed and discolored leaves should be noted and watched closely.

Second, the soil type, slope, aspect, and placement of the tree are evaluated for a number of factors. Each type of tree has slightly different needs when it comes to soil type such as drainage and nutrients, pH, sunlight, water requirements, and other environmental factors.



Sudden Oak Death

Mulching can reduce the impact and stress upon the roots of a tree by providing a stable environment that is cooler and more moist than the surrounding soil. Organic matter (never plastic) in only a 2 to 4 inch deep layer from close to the trunk out to the drip line of the tree or slightly beyond also helps to control weeds and eliminate the need to mow grass that is in contact with the tree. This will prevent the all too common mechanical damage to the trunk base and tops of exposed roots caused by lawn mowers and string trimmers. Mulch also helps eliminate competition for water and nutrients from the surrounding weeds and grasses. There are a number of readily available bagged and bulk providers of amended soil and organic soil amendments which can increase the organic matter content and adjust pH to some degree.