

## Facts and Fallacies About Trees

In an ongoing series on popular tree care myths, the National Arborist Association advises people not to get fooled by misconceptions and act in a responsible way.

### **Myth 1: The more mulch the better.**

There is a tendency for roots to start growing shallowly if mulch is spread too thickly. Root death can occur in these cases during a series of dry days. Excessive amounts of mulch may disturb the soil moisture content and aeration. When applied properly, mulch is good for trees. Not more than 4 inches should be applied, 6 inches away from the trunk of the tree. When applied correctly, mulch reduces soil compaction, helps retain soil moisture for roots, prevents bark damage, maintains moderate temperature and reduces the chances of competing sod and weed growth.

### **Myth 2: The more water the better.**

Over watering can cause a tree to suffocate. Roots need to respire and excess water may cause damage. Water is not tree food.

### **Myth 3: Filling cavities benefits trees.**

Cavity filling is not needed to support or improve the health of hollow trees. Trees experts have found that cavity filling with cement can actually damage a hollow tree. The column of cement created in the tree by a cavity fill doesn't move, whereas the tree sways with the wind constantly. The rubbing created by the swaying tree and the solid column of cement further damages the tree. The NAA recommends supporting trees, if required, with cables, braces, or tree guys. If you must fill a cavity, have a professional arborist install a synthetic foam fill.

### **Myth 4: Painting wounds help healing.**

It is a common belief that applying paint to cuts and other wounded parts of trees reduces the chances of disease. However, a painted wound holds moisture in, accelerating decay. Leave the wound open and let the tree cover the wound naturally.

### **Myth 5: Topping is an accepted form of pruning.**

Do not top trees. Topping and lion tailing, over pruning the bottom of the canopy and individual limbs, damages trees. Tree pruning should be done according to ANSI A300 standards and in a manner beneficial to the tree.

A competent, professional arborist can offer diagnosis and preventive maintenance to keep your trees in top condition and help you make the right decisions to keep them healthy. Contact the licensed tree experts at Pardoe's Lawn and Tree Service at 800-427-4890.

