

Remember Your Trees – Fall Fix Up

It's time to clean up and fix up in preparation for winter. While you're planning on things that need to be done to your house and garage, take some time to focus on your trees. Are you getting all the benefits from them that you want? Do they enhance the beauty of your home and provide you with privacy? Are they situated in a way that adds to the threat of wildfire?

Are there things you can do to protect your trees? Are they getting enough water? Are you protecting them from the fatal attacks of insects?

Perhaps a new house has been built next to yours. It may be possible to move a mature tree (up to 35 feet tall) so that it gives you more privacy. Or, adding a tree might be the answer to softening that view of your neighbor's house. Either may help to improve the looks of your home.

We've all become more aware of the ever-present dangers of wildfire. As most of us know, in order to obtain a permit for a new house or a major addition, an extensive reduction of the number of trees close to a dwelling is required. While this is not mandatory for existing residences, some mitigation of the danger may be something you'd like to consider.

Cutting down trees is something we'd all rather avoid. Perhaps some trees that are close enough to be dangerous can be moved to a different location. If it is necessary to remove some trees, similar trees located further from buildings can possibly replace them. You may be able to both reduce fire danger and improve privacy at the same time.

Trees with low limbs can be described as "ladder fuel". These could allow a ground fire to climb to your home. Simply removing these lower branches can significantly reduce this danger. Even simpler is the process of cleaning up accumulated leaves, pine needles and pinecones. Fallen limbs should also be picked up and disposed of.

As the growing season draws to an end, remember to drain your watering system. On occasion, your trees may need water during the winter months. This is most likely with newly transplanted trees. You can avoid winter drought by watering when the ground is dry and there is no snow cover. Use a hose on the surface, about halfway between the trunk and the drip line. If possible, use a root feeder to get the water down through the surface. Begin the watering process early in the day so the water won't freeze around the tree. To determine whether a tree needs water, dig down to a depth of 6-8 inches on the outer edge of the drip line. If the dirt is crumbly and dry it is time to water.

Probably the greatest danger to our trees is insects. Last year, over a million trees fell to the mountain pine beetle, Ips beetle and spruce beetle. Have your trees sprayed by a professional tree spraying company to prevent infestation.

You can help protect your trees against drought and insects by treating them with fertilizer and other supplements, which add soil nutrients and enhance root growth. A three-part growth stimulant program, offered by Spalding Trees, LLC (303-526-1256), can be used for newly transplanted trees or for existing trees.

As part of your fall fix up; remember to manage your trees. Protect them from drought and insects. Move or add to them to improve your privacy and enhance the beauty of your home. Mitigate the danger of fire to dwellings, both yours and your neighbors'.