

SCRUGGS TREE SERVICE



Tree Tips, Notes and News

HOT  **TOPICS**

Fall is Pruning Season

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Fall is one of the best times to examine the safety and health of your trees.

With the leaves off, cracks, defects and deadwood are easier to see. Look for changes in color, fungus growth, cracks, and other symptoms, which can help make this determination. Since the leaves are off, the view of the entire tree's architecture is clear and a thorough check can be performed.

Winter storms are approaching and that means hazards should be removed before they damage property.

Keep in mind that, contrary to popular belief, most trees can be pruned year round.

Pruning, though, is much more than the simple act of sawing off limbs. Proper pruning is an art based on scientific principles of plant physiology. At its most basic level, pruning trees involves removing damaged, dead or structurally weak limbs, which will improve a tree's health and reduce the chances of personal or property damage caused by falling limbs.

Proper pruning encourages growth, increases flower and fruit production, improves plant health, repairs damage and helps add aesthetic appeal to the tree. Pruning at the right time and in the right way is critical. It is possible to kill a tree through neglect or over pruning.

Proper pruning cuts help trees protect themselves from dangerous diseases and wood decays. These diseases and wood decays can lead to the premature death of the tree and are able to attack a tree much more easily when improper pruning cuts are made.

Premature Fall Colors Could be Signs of Tree Stress

One of nature's finest shows is about to take place. Folks gravitate from the far corners to view our fall foliage displays.

Color changing leaves make for a beautiful display, but early changes in leaf color could be a sign that your tree is stressed and is susceptible to insect and disease attack.

If the leaves on your trees seem to be getting a jump start on fall compared with those on similar trees in the area, a problem might be indicated.

Premature colors can be an indication that a tree isn't vigorous enough to withstand insects and disease organisms that may attack it, not to mention the usual changes that occur when the weather turns cold. Occasionally only one or two limbs of the tree will show premature fall color. This could be a sign of a disease at work, weakening only the infected limbs. More commonly, the entire tree will exhibit premature fall coloration, a phenomenon usually linked to root-related stress. Trees respond to these stresses by trying to curtail their above-ground growth.

Think of the tree's leaves as small factories containing raw materials, products and by-products, all in chemical form and some with color. As the leaf is "abandoned" by the tree, the green chlorophyll—the dominant chemical found in most leaves—is broken down and "recycled," leaving behind other-colored chemicals. Supply lines to the leaves also become clogged. If the major chemical remaining in the abandoned leaf is red, then the leaf turns red. If it's yellow, then the leaf turns yellow, and so on.

The yearly variation in color intensity is due to varying weather conditions, which can affect the balance of chemicals and their composition in the leaves. Differing amounts of rainfall, sunlight, temperature, humidity and other factors may have an effect on how bright, how quickly and how long the "leaf-peeping" season will be in any given year.

Formulate a Plan

It's hard to think of fall and winter's wind, snow and ice storms while still dealing with summer's heat but, nevertheless, fall and winter will arrive and not too far off in our future. One of the greatest dangers to life and property during hurricanes and severe storms is posed by falling trees and limbs. Now is the time to formulate a plan.

The time to schedule a property inspection is well in advance of the stormy season. Doing this will help you determine potential weaknesses and dangers in time.

Look at your trees for these warning signs:

- Wires in contact with tree branches. Trees may become energized when contacted by electric wires.
- Dead or partially attached limbs hung up in higher branches could fall and cause damage or injury.
- Cracked stems and branch forks that could cause catastrophic failure of a tree section.
- Hollow or decayed areas on the trunk or main limbs.
- Mushrooms growing from the bark that indicate a decayed and weakened stem.
- Peeling bark or gaping wounds in the trunk also indicate structural weakness.
- Fallen or uprooted trees putting pressure on other trees beneath them.
- Tight, V-shaped forks, which are much more prone to failure than open U-shaped ones.
- Heaving soil at the tree base is a potential indicator of an unsound root system.

Remember, too, that a tree is a living thing, and its integrity and stability change over time, so don't assume a tree that has survived previous severe storms will necessarily survive another.

Visit us at www.scruggstree.com for more important tree care information.

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