



AUTUMN 2005  
Upper Valley Edition

# Green Works

Newsletter of Tree Preservation, Forestry and Land Enhancement



**It's been quite a season** for weather and pest related tree problems. I lost two old friends this past summer—one giant Red oak and one Sugar maple—to anthracnose and storm damage respectively. And I also have a very large, American elm that is beginning to succumb to the dreaded Dutch elm disease.

Even with the best of care from our arborists, we can't always reverse a process of decline and death. The good news: we can often delay it by practicing good maintenance techniques and by choosing to replant with hardy and disease resistant varieties.

Here's to planting new friends next spring!

—Will Russell

## Landscaping Choices for Under Mature Trees

We've all seen it (and some of us have experienced the frustration first hand): spindly, sparse and unhappy-looking grass planted beneath mature landscape trees. Aesthetic issues aside, it's also a maintenance issue that at best makes mowing and trimming more difficult and at worst is harmful to trees when the bark is damaged with the trimmer string or mower blade. From the tree preservation point of view there are two very good alternatives: organic mulches and groundcovers.

Mulch, in the form of wood chips, bark or other organic materials, can be an economical and easy-to-look-at solution as long as it is applied with restraint. No digging is necessary since it is applied over the existing soil and roots, it helps to reduce weeds and control grass, it assists with soil moisture retention and improves soil structure, and it provides a finished, well-maintained look. At all costs a mulch 'volcano' must be avoided; it should never push against the trunk of the tree nor be more than three inches

*"Trees are your best antiques."*

—ALEXANDER SMITH

deep. For best effectiveness, the mulch should cover the area under the tree out to the drip line.

Groundcover solutions take more consideration and planning but can reward one with a more naturalistic, woodland feeling in the landscape. Some trees are more amenable than others to soil disturbance and this should be the first factor to consider when deciding about under story plantings (*see list on page 2*).

### PREPARING FOR PLANTING

In preparation for groundcover planting, grass and weeds under the tree may be removed carefully by hand (a quick but labor-intensive approach), sprayed with an appropriate herbicide properly applied (an environmentally objectionable choice for some), or smothered with thick layer of newsprint (the slowest method, taking up to three months to kill the grass). When choosing nursery plants, smaller is better so that they don't initially compete as much with the tree for water and nutrients.

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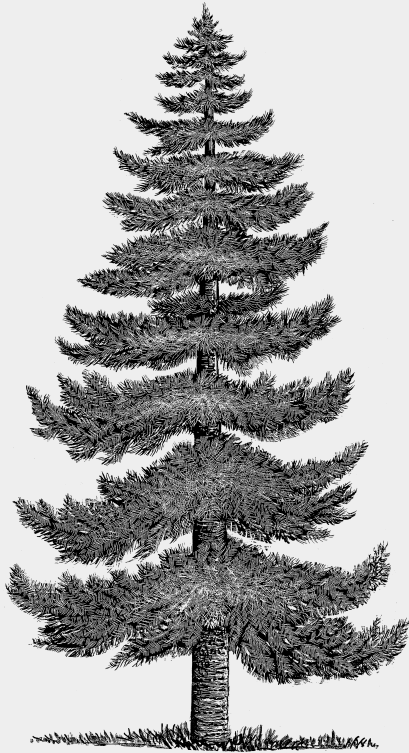
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The oaks and the pines,  
and their brethren of the wood,  
have seen so many suns  
rise and set,  
so many seasons come and go,  
and so many generations  
pass into silence,  
that we may well wonder what  
“the story of the trees”  
would be to us  
if they had tongues to tell it,  
or we ears fine enough  
to understand.

–Author Unknown,  
quoted in *Quotations for  
Special Occasions*  
by Maud van Buren, 1938

## CHIPPERS

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All holes for planting should be dug carefully around tree roots and watering well and frequently will help both to establish the seedlings and nourish the tree. A three inch top dressing of organic compost at planting and annually thereafter, always kept well away from the tree trunk, will ensure good health for all.

### Consider the Trees:

#### AVOID DISTURBING IF POSSIBLE

Beeches (*Fagus*)  
Buckeyes (*Aesculus*)  
Cherries & Plums (*Prunus*)  
Dogwoods (*Cornus*)  
Hemlocks (*Tsuga*)  
Larches (*Larix*)  
Lindens (*Tilia*)  
Magnolias (*Magnolia*)  
Pines (*Pinus*)  
Red oaks (*Quercus rubra*)  
Sugar maples (*Acer saccharum*)

#### PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Hickories (*Carya*)  
Hornbeams (*Carpinus*)  
Ironwoods (*Ostrya virginia*)  
Redbuds (*Cercis canadensis*)  
Red maples (*Acer rubrum*)  
River birches (*Betula nigra*)  
Sourwoods (*Oxydendrum arboretum*)  
Spruces (*Picea*)  
Swamp White oaks (*Quercus bicolor*)  
Sycamores (*Plantanus occidentalis*)  
White ashes (*Fraxinus americana*)

#### PLANT WITH ABANDON

Arborvitae (*Thuja*)  
Crabapples (*Malus*)  
Ginkgos (*Gingko biloba*)  
Hawthorns (*Crataegus*)  
Honeylocusts (*Gleditsia triacanthos*)  
Pecans (*Carya illinoensis*)  
Poplars (*Populus*)  
Silver maples (*Acer saccharinum*)  
White oaks (*Quercus alba*)  
Willows (*Salix*)

### Groundcovers:

(for Dry Shade Areas Under Mature  
Trees in NH & VT)

Ajuga (*Ajuga reptans*)  
Bishops Weed  
(*Aegopodium podagraria*)  
Black Cohosh, Snakeroot, Bugbane  
(*Cimicifuga racemosa*)  
Blue Fescue (*Festuca caesia*)  
Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*)  
Columbine (*Aquilegia*)  
Creeping Mahonia (*Mahonia repens*)  
Dead Nettle (*Lamium maculatum*)  
Epimediums (*Epimediums*)  
Foamflower (*Tiarella*)  
Hakonechloa Grass  
(*Hakonechloa macra*)  
Heartleaf Bergenia  
(*Bergenia cordifolia*)  
Hosta (*Hosta*)  
Ivy (*Hedera*)  
Japanese Painted Fern  
(*Athyrium niponicum*)  
Japanese Spurge  
(*Pachysandria terminalis*)  
Lady’s Mantle (*Alchemilla*)  
Lilyturf (*Liriope spicata*)  
Lily-of-the-Valley  
(*Convallaria majalis*)  
Lungwort (*Pulmonaria*)  
Mondo Grasses (*Ophiopogon*)  
Periwinkle or Myrtle (*Vinca minor*)  
Siberian (*Iris*)  
Solomon’s Seal (*Polygonatum*)  
Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)  
Yellow Archangel  
(*Lamiumstrum galcabdolon*)

Resources: *Landscape Plants for Vermont*, UVM Extension, January 2002; *Fine Gardening*, Sept-Oct 2005; *Trees and Turf*, International Society of Arboriculture, 2001

# Notes from the Arborist:

## Customer Forum

**Q: A small woodpecker is making holes all over my birch tree. Does this mean my tree is full of insects and dying?**

You likely have a sapsucker which bores 1/4 inch holes closely spaced around the trunk or stems of the tree. Unfortunately sapsuckers are feeding on sap and not insects and are destructive to trees. Try wrapping the affected area with burlap or hardware cloth. Remove declining poplars in the area to discourage nesting of this species of bird.



*Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*

**Q: I hired you to cable large maples at my house two years ago. Will I need to re-cable these again soon?**

We install cables high in the tree to take advantage of leverage and meet our industry standards. It takes many years for the leaders in the trees to outgrow properly installed cables. Periodic inspection of the trees and installed cables is prudent in a well maintained landscape.

**Q: Are the new elm tree cultivars really resistant to Dutch elm disease?**

We have seen a number of the more common cultivars become infected with DED. With enough environmental pressure even the resistant trees are prone to infection. As with healthy native elms, key preservation techniques are: pruning, removal of local dying elms and the resultant wood and annual/biennial fungicide treatments.

**Q: The crabapples at my house lost most of their leaves this year. It was especially bad on the lower part of the canopy. What happened? Can anything be done to prevent this next year?**

It sounds like your crabapple trees are prone to apple scab. Wet spring weather like we had this year will exacerbate leaf fungus problems including apple scab. We have fungus suppression products (fungicides) that work well if timed properly. Call for a free quote for next year.

Please email your tree related questions to: [askthearborist@chippersinc.com](mailto:askthearborist@chippersinc.com).

## MEET A CHIPPER



**Adam Clifford** of Lebanon is one of our amazing lead arborists based in our Lebanon office. He came to us a little over a year ago with more than a half a dozen years of experience in the field and is now an internationally certified arborist and Vermont certified pest applicator.

Adam was born and brought up in the area and graduated from Lebanon High School. Continuing to have strong local extended family connections, his grandparent's Canaan farm remains in the family as a place for gardening, maple sugaring and holiday gatherings.

Ever a devoted Patriots and Red Sox fan, Adam and his wife Gillie also enjoy camping, canoeing and just spending time together. In August the Clifford's welcomed their first child, Thomas Charles, 7 pounds, 11 ounces. Congratulations Adam and Gillie!

### chippers SERVICES

#### Tree Preservation

- Pruning & Cabling
- Natural and Traditional Insect & Disease Control
- Tree & Ornamental Fertilization
- Lawn Fertilization
- Hedge Shearing
- Tree & Stump Removal
- Crane Service

#### Forestry

- Current Use Enrollment
- Environmentally Sound Approach
- Forest Management Planning
- Timber Sale Assistance
- Forest Road Construction
- Timber Marking & Mapping
- Low Impact Harvesting

#### Land Enhancement

- Forest Stand Enhancement
- Land Reclamation
- View Work
- Nature Trail Layout & Installation
- Vegetation Control
- Brush Chipping
- Stump Grinding
- Field Mowing
- Excavating Service

# Fall/Winter Check List

- Apply protective mulch
- Deep fall watering
- Apply anti-desiccant sprays
- Plant and transplant
- Garden rototilling
- Professional inspection of trees
- Rake leaves off lawns
- Apply lime to lawns & gardens
- Thatch and aerate lawns... overseed
- Protect sun & wind sensitive shrubs
- Lawn fertilization & seeding
- Rake leaves from below trees affected by leaf blights
- Divide spring blooming perennials
- Clean and store outdoor tools & ornaments
- Pick apples and make pie or crisp
- Check out the **chippers** website: [www.chippersinc.com](http://www.chippersinc.com)

*“When the oak is felled the forest echoes with the fall, but a hundred acorns are sown silently by an unnoticed breeze..”*

—THOMAS CARLYLE



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