



AUTUMN 2004

# Green Works

Newsletter of Tree Preservation, Forestry and Land Enhancement

**Happy fall!** We hope you are enjoying the autumn crispness and marvelous changing colors of our landscape now. As the days grow shorter we are also reminded of our many property chores that still need to be accomplished before the snow flies (see our Fall Checklist).

As you rake and bag leaves it's a great time to take note of any issues your trees or shrubs have had this past summer in preparation for next year. As Mark Liebert's article on Integrated Pest Management emphasizes, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

In our Notes from the Arborist column, we address a few of the many commonly asked questions our arborists receive from customers. We really appreciate your feedback on our services and how we can improve, and we are always happy to answer your questions so please let us know if we can be of help!

—Will Russell

## IPM: Preventative Care for Your Landscape

Mark Liebert, *Plant Health Care Specialist*

**“Help!** My trees and shrubs are being devoured by insects and look terrible and need to be sprayed!” Every year tree care companies across America get these all too familiar phone calls from clients in late summer. Unfortunately, by the time the phone call is made, often significant damage has already been done. The key is to take preventative action early in the growing season.

*“I like trees because they seem more resigned to the way they have to live than other things do.”*

—WILLA CATHER

Integrated Pest Management, commonly referred to as IPM, is the use of cultural, biological and chemical techniques to manage insect and disease pests in the landscape. The key parts to any IPM program are identification, monitoring, and treatment. Identification refers to not only properly identifying the plant, but also all the possible pests and beneficial organisms. **Monitoring** is the backbone of any IPM program. This

crucial part is where the IPM technician repeatedly inspects the property for any developing problems. Treatment refers to any cultural, biological, or chemical techniques used to suppress the pest below the predetermined threshold level. For example, if the technician finds a few small Tent Caterpillar nests, he or she may choose to remove them manually. This is an example of a cultural technique.

Advances in monitoring, such as the use of insect growth degree days, allow arborists, IPM technicians and homeowners to predict the emergence of many insects and diseases. Since plants, insects and many diseases need a certain amount of warm weather to develop, we can use this information to help us prevent unnecessary treatments. More advanced tree care companies such as Chippers use their own weather stations to keep track of these degree days for their local area. Calculating the daily degree day number will signify what insects are going to emerge. Early in the season the total degree day number will rise slowly, but during the summer it will increase rapidly.

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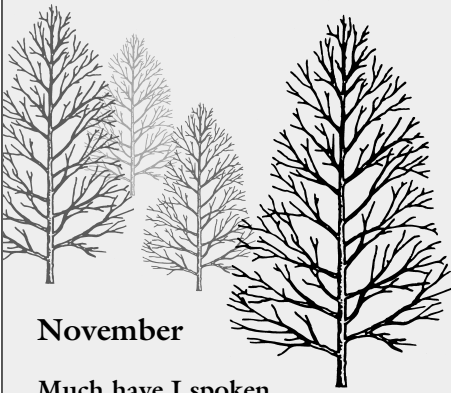
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## November

Much have I spoken  
of the faded leaf;

Long have I listened to the  
wailing wind,  
And watched it ploughing  
through the heavy clouds,  
For autumn charms my  
melancholy mind.

When autumn comes,  
the poets sing a dirge:  
The year must perish;  
all the flowers are dead;  
The sheaves are gathered;  
and the mottled quail  
Runs in the stubble,  
but the lark has fled!

Still, autumn ushers in the  
Christmas cheer,  
The holy-berries and the  
ivy-tree:  
They weave a chaplet for the  
Old Year's bier,  
These waiting mourners  
do not sing for me!

I find sweet peace in the depths  
of autumn woods,  
Where grow the ragged ferns  
and roughened moss:  
The naked, silent trees  
have taught me this,—  
The loss of beauty  
is not always loss!

—Elizabeth Stoddard

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After referring to an insect growth degree day list (available online or from your local extension service), we may see that at 100 degree days the eastern Tent caterpillars are emerging. This would be an ideal time to treat for these insects on properties where many cherry and/or crabapples trees exist.

### FUNGAL DISEASES

Fungal diseases are one of the most misunderstood and misdiagnosed problems with trees and shrubs. Many homeowners have called in late July and asked us to come spray their apple tree because the leaves are spotted and falling off. Unfortunately, most fungal infections occur early in the season but don't rear their ugly heads until late summer. At this point it is too late to use a fungicide to treat it. What we usually recommend is a cultural treatment of raking and disposing of the infected material. This will minimize the number of spores to re-infect the tree the following spring.

Fungal diseases appear in many different ways from white powder on lilacs (powdery mildew) to dark lesions on the leaves of a crabapple. The key part of fungal disease management is to preventatively treat species likely to be affected. Fungicides have different capabilities and an experienced IPM technician will be familiar with these. Some fungicides provide protection while others may be able to eradicate existing infections to a certain degree. Sulfur, a natural fungicide, will protect a plant for a few days. Banner (a.i.propiconazole) not only provides extended protection but will also allow for some eradication or "reach back". This means if the timing of the application was delayed by a few days, the treatment would still be effective. With sulfur you do not get that luxury and thus more applications are necessary.

### PEST MANAGEMENT

There are many common larger animals sometimes considered pests in our landscapes: bear, deer, mice, porcupine and sapsuckers. An interesting example of an often misdiagnosed pest is the sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*), a 8-9" tall bird often mistaken for the common woodpecker. Sapsuckers feed on the inner bark and sap of many species of trees including birch, mountain ash, and hemlock. In the spring the sapsucker will fly from tree to tree testing each one until it finds a nice sugary sap. When this tree is located it will feed on it for the season by drilling small 1/4" holes in concentric circles around the tree. These holes may eventually girdle and kill the tree and is often mistaken for borer damage. Repellent sprays combined with physical barriers over the damaged areas have shown to be effective.

Integrated Pest Management allows for the management of your landscape in an environmentally conscious manner. Both natural and traditional programs are available and you can determine the number of visits needed at your property with the assistance of your consulting arborist or IPM Technician. A typical program consists of four to six visits with each visit timed for specific targets. Early visits may be geared towards fungal infection prevention and later visits toward piercing/sucking insect suppression.

### CHIPPERS

Lebanon (603) 448-4800

New London (603) 526-4500

Woodstock (802) 457-5100

Toll Free (866) 683-6222

trees@chippersinc.com

## *A few tips for healthy trees and shrubs...*

1. Keeping plants healthy and vigorous with watering, pruning and fertilization will minimize the need for aggressive treatments later.
2. Plant disease resistant varieties appropriate to our growing zone. Many local nurseries and garden centers can recommend varieties of trees and shrubs that are disease resistant and will be able to cope with the harsh New England winter.
3. Set-up an IPM program with a reliable tree care company long before the growing season begins. Make sure they understand your goals for your property, and you feel confident in their ability to achieve these goals.

## **Notes from the Arborist:** *Customer Forum*

### **Q: How deeply should I mulch my trees?**

Generally a two to four inch layer of mulch will mimic the natural environment. Annual weeding or replacement of the mulch will maintain its appearance without making the mulch too deep by continually adding on top. Attempt to keep the mulch ring even with the grade so all or part of the root flare of the tree is exposed.

### **Q: The carpenters working on my house addition like to park in the shade of my favorite maple. Is this OK?**

If the parking area is paved or already an established parking place than they can enjoy the shade. If it is a lawn or a mulched area then do not allow any cars or trucks beneath the canopy of the tree. Preventing soil compaction will add many years to the life of your trees.

### **Q: Some guys in a pick-up truck stopped by to tell me they can prune my trees for half the price of your company. Why not save the money?**

Insurance and liability to the homeowner are a very large concern—but what about the trees? Chances are these guys are looking for easy money... and progressive, expert tree care is not easy. Our crews are well trained, experienced and safe. You get what you pay for!

**Cal Felicetti**, *ASCA Member Consulting Arborist, ISA Certified Arborist*

## **MEET A CHIPPER**



**Mark Fogarty** is our in-house licensed forester. Everyone in the office knows that when the network printer is filled with map-sized paper, the deadline for “Current Use” enrollment applications is fast approaching!

Mark grew up in Redding, CT and received his BS in Forest Management from the University of Maine at Orono. For over four years he has managed our forestry division, assisting our Vermont and New Hampshire clients with the development of sustainable and ethical forest management plans.

Recently buying his first home on 10 acres in Vershire, Mark has quickly become familiar with the homeowner's endless project list. He devotes much of his free time to landscaping and “chipperizing” his property.

Commenting on his 50 minute commute to work every day, Mark said, “I don't mind it at all. I get to live in the woods, and I love it!”

**We recommend the following web resources for further information and guidance:**

[www.isa-arbor.com](http://www.isa-arbor.com)

[www.americanforests.org](http://www.americanforests.org)

[www.asca-consultants.org](http://www.asca-consultants.org)

<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmext/>

# 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

*“The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.”*

—NELSON HENDERSON



**chippers**

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