

Mature Tree Care

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Large, mature trees not only add beauty to our property but they are functional as well. A healthy, large tree increases in value with age and helps to increase property values. Large trees purify our air and save energy by providing shade from the summer's heat. They can also protect the home from the winter wind, help to reduce erosion, and absorb excess water.

Many trees can live to be 200 to 300 years old with good maintenance. Providing good maintenance to your mature trees on your property is a good investment. This should include regular inspections, mulching, fertilization and pruning.

Tree Inspection

A regular inspection of your mature trees will identify any issues with the trees health before the problem becomes too serious. By regular inspections you can hopefully prevent or reduce the severity of the problems such as insect damage, disease, and environmental problems. During your regular tree inspections examine these four characteristics of tree vigor: new leaves or buds, leaf size and absence of crown dieback (which is death of the upper part of the tree). If your tree does not show these characteristics of growth, there could be a problem. More signs of poor health include trunk decay and fungus growth, the tree canopy has dieback and loose bark on the tree on the trunk.

Mulching

Mulching trees helps provide a stable root environment. Also mulching helps keep the ground cooler and moist. It also helps give the tree extra protection from trunk damage caused by lawn mowers and string trimmers. Mulch should be placed 2-to-4" deep and cover the entire root system, which can be as far as 2-to-3 times the diameter of the branch spread of the tree. Care should be taken not to cover the trunk of the tree or piled up around the trunk commonly known as "volcano" mulching. This can cause moist bark conditions and cause decay and insects invade the trunk of the tree. Mulch any deeper than 2-to-4" can rob the roots of the oxygen they need to survive.

Pruning

Pruning of mature trees is necessary to remove dead, diseased, or insect-infested branches from time to time to insure good health, as well as maintaining safety of the tree. Pruning can change the growth habit of the tree so unnecessary pruning should be avoided. Over pruning a tree can be harmful as the tree can not gather and process enough sunlight to survive. A tree should never be "topped."

Fertilization

Mature trees need to be fertilized to insure proper care from time to time. Urban trees grow in adverse conditions with soil that lacks the proper nutrients a tree needs to grow in a healthy manner. You should know our soil condition, especially the pH and organic matter content. A certified arborist can help you arrange a soil test to determine soil nutrient. It is important to know that many lawn fertilizers contain broadleaf herbicides which can be absorbed by your tree's root system and can harm the tree.

Removal

Tree removal should be a last resort but if the tree is dead, dying or considered hazardous, the tree should be removed, especially for safety reasons. Sometimes there are other reasons to remove a tree: obstruction or crowding and causing harm to other more desirable trees, and new construction that will damage the tree and possibly cause a future safety hazard.

Certified Arborists are experienced professionals who have passed an extensive examination covering all aspects of tree care. For more information on mature tree care and to contact a local ISA Certified Arborist refer to the following sites:

www.isa-arbor.com

www.treesaregood.com