

2013

FREE



Tales From The Wood *Fall Update*

Go Dig a Hole!

“When’s the best time to plant a tree? 20 years ago.”

That’s the question from an old Chinese collection of wise musings. It goes on, to pose a second question, “When’s the second best time to a tree? Today.” Okay, maybe a little silly but full of wisdom. Through the years I’ve planted many a young small tree around town for various friends or customers. Many of those people have moved on in one manner or another leaving behind an untold legacy of care for the future. I’m proud and deeply moved when I pass by or visit those trees today. I’m also deeply saddened when I see one of them has died or been removed well before it reaches its healing potential. Literally “cut down” in the prime of life.



“A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.”

At the age of 58, I’m finding myself suffering from early onset “old”. To help offset my own I’ll be out planting trees for several events and some just for fun myself. Perhaps you could join me, or better yet, partner up with your own family and friends and put a few in yourself. You’ll create memories that

You'll create memories that genuinely grow over time to the point that you'll someday be reminded of how small we humans really are and like it too! In spite of the news out of Washington, the government shutting down, constant trouble & concern in the mid-east, each of us has not just the opportunity, but almost the obligation to help make things better by planting a tree. Color me an optimist if you must, but planting trees will inspire your spirit and connect you to the Queens Crown that we're so known for. How about this: Last year we encouraged you to buy live evergreen trees for Christmas to plant afterwards. We've had one really inspiring example of that that we were able to participate in. The first grade class of Trinity Episcopal School in Uptown Charlotte traditionally bought cut trees and decorated them



One of our long time customers, and fellow tree lovers, Olga Faison had a child in that class, read our newsletter, and an event was created. After the holidays, three of us from Heartwood went and met the classes, helped dig the holes with the boys and girls, and helped plant two Deadora Cedars out in front of the school. Those trees won't grow much for another 2 years but after that, they'll take off for the heavens, and those children will be inspired over time as they see their efforts rise to the sun. I know, my Mom got me into the tree business when I was 4 when she helped me plant some Silver Maples in her flower bed. We moved a year later but she brought them with us and the importance of trees was by then firmly planted in my head & heart.

I hope you'll take this to heart and consider planting some trees this fall and winter. Local efforts that you can join include but are not limited to include: Creek Releaf which is held every year by the Charlotte Public Tree Fund involves and needs a huge group of volunteers. Up to 500 folks are needed as they endeavor to plant over 2000 trees along Mecklenburg's creeks and flood plains. This helps restore habitat and cover to the creeks, which helps bring back wildlife and fish. Info or to sign up is available at their website, charlottetreefund.org. We'll be there.

A more recent group on the scene, TreesCharlotte.org is a result of a public/private push to restore our canopy from its dwindling 45% coverage to a City Council stated goal of 50% coverage by 2050. Maybe that doesn't sound like much but it works out

to over 200,000 trees to be planted. They've set goals of over 7500 trees per year to start. They have multiple opportunities both large and small to help get trees back into clear cut neighborhoods, schools, and about anywhere that we can get them. Go to TreesCharlotte.org to read about and sign up for some of their events. We'll be there also.

Finally, buy a small evergreen for Christmas, bring it inside, and with diligent watering you'll be able to plant it to start the New Year. We'll be offering these trees delivered the week before Christmas if you call and order by December 1st. Help us grow Charlotte's society great once again... Now go dig a hole, and plant a tree!

~"A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in." ~

The Cankerworm: Life Stages and Action Items

Late Fall/Early Winter

After the 1st series of cold nights, reaching at or below freezing, adult fall cankerworms emerge from pupas in the ground. Females are wingless and climb up trees, and any other vertical object, searching for the highest point to mate and lay eggs. One female can lay up to 100 eggs.



Female Cankerworms

Action Item: Bands may be affixed to the trunks of trees in the Fall before adult emergence. These bands control cankerworm populations by capturing the wingless female moth during her ascent to the top of the tree.



Bug Barrier



Tangle Foot

Early Spring.

Just after full leaf expansion in early spring cankerworms emerge to feed on the lush new foliage. Cankerworms are not host specific when it comes to feeding, but in the Metro Charlotte Area they do the most damage to willow oaks, flowering dogwoods, and ornamental cherries. Cankerworms feed for 5 to 6 weeks.

Severe cankerworm infestations can completely defoliate a tree. While one year of defoliation may not cause too much harm to tree health, consecutive years can become a serious stress for a tree. Every time a tree is defoliated energy reserves must be used to create more leaves. If these reserves are tapped year after year the tree may be more susceptible to attacks by detrimental insects and disease.



Early Instar of Cankerworm

Action Item: If bands were not applied to the trees or cankerworms have parachuted in from unbanned neighboring trees, foliar applied products may be used to control the larva. There are a variety of products that may be sprayed from organic *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), a naturally occurring bacteria that affects insects in the order lepidoptera, to naturally derived synthetic insecticides that are more stable, but still have little impact on beneficial insects.

Spring through Fall

After the cankerworms have completed their consumption of leaves they lower themselves to the ground, where they burrow into the soil and pupate. They live as pupa until late Fall/early Winter, and the lifecycle repeats itself.



Action Item: If your trees were defoliated, then the best thing to do is make them as healthy as possible. While trees produce energy in the leaves through photosynthesis, they get most of their nutrients from the soil they are rooted in. It is not uncommon for our urban/suburban soils to be lacking in some nutrients essential for plant health. Taking soil samples for analysis can help pinpoint what is lacking in the soil, and what fertilizer blend is most suited to your site.

~“When’s the best time to plant a tree? 20 years ago.”~

The Interns are Our Future

Thirty-four years ago, at the dawning of Heartwood Tree Service, the average tree guy was a rough-and-tumble fellow who got into the work because he liked chainsaws and wasn’t afraid of heights. Few people thought being an arborist was a true profession, and probably fewer knew what the words arborist or arboriculture meant. But a lot can change in three and a half decades. Today the industry is attracting interested, and educated men and women. More and more colleges and universities are adding arboriculture classes to their curriculum. Many of these institutions are now offering majors, minors, options, and certificates in this growing field.



Most of these degree programs require an internship or co-op as part of the curriculum. This past spring Heartwood accepted our first intern from Central Piedmont Community College. Ryan Tullar is a perky young Horticultural Technology major with an affection for trees. Ryan is an avid music lover, and shows promise as a tattoo artist represented by the self-drawn “Live Free” adorning his arm. During his time at Heartwood Ryan has been exposed to all aspects of our daily operations, from dragging brush to spraying trees. Though Ryan is our first official intern we’ve had a relationship with Central Piedmont for years. Heartwood Arborists have guest lectured in CPCC’s arboriculture class several times, and Ryan also joins another CPCC Horticultural Technology grad, Board-Certified Master Arborist John Maurice, currently employed at Heartwood.

We hope to grow our partnership with CPCC's Horticultural Technology Program, and we are excited to open our doors and help educate the next generation of arborists.

~Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is in flower~ Albert Camus

The Beauty of Autumn

As you sit outside, taking in these wonderful and cool evenings, a question may arise. Why do leaves change color? Truthfully, they are revealing their colors. While October is mostly filled with people looking for their disguise for Halloween, leaves are getting ready to take their masks off.

The many colors you see in fall are actually already present in the leaves. They are in the form of carotenoids and anthocyanins. They are just masked by the chlorophyll in the leaf. Carotenoids, anthocyanins, and chlorophyll, oh my! Don't worry, I'll explain. Chlorophyll is found in the cellular structure of leaves and are responsible for making "food" during the growing season.



Chlorophyll is an amazing thing. They take the energy of the sun and use carbon dioxide from the air and the water from the ground to create energy for the tree to grow in the form of sugar and starch. Chlorophyll is very abundant in the leaves and their vibrant green color masks the true color of the leaf that is already there.

Carotenoids are responsible for the orange, yellow, and brown colors that you see in plants, vegetables, and fruits. Think carrots. This makes it easy to remember. The carotenoids are always present during the growing season. You just can't see them due to the massive amount of chlorophyll being produced by the tree.

Now anthocyanins are produced towards the end of summer. They are responsible for the red and purple colors you see. Not all trees produce anthocyanins, and the production of this chemical is based upon the weather and changes in climate.

As the weather changes towards the fall season, trees change as well. The cooler nights and decreasing amount of sunlight triggers a response from the tree.

The trees in your yard and neighborhood start to get ready for the winter ahead. They slowly stop producing chlorophyll until they cease it all together. With that being said, the green color fades from the leaf and reveals the carotenoids and recent production of anthocyanins, based on species.

The vibrancy of the fall colors differ from year to year. The amount of rainfall throughout the year and weather trends towards the end of the season dictate timing and fall color. If a number of warm days followed by cool, but not freezing nights is a trend then you can expect vibrant fall color. This is due to the production of anthocyanin in the leaves. Anthocyanins are produced in greater numbers when more sugars are produced in the leaves (warm sunny days) and slower flow of those sugars happens (cooler nights). Anthocyanins help the tree to recover this energy from the leaves to store for next year. They act as a protection device for the leaves.

So what you are looking for is a warm and moist spring, a summer that is not too hot or dry, and a fall with warm days and cool nights for a great fall color. Seems familiar to the past season, doesn't it? So grab your favorite beverage and a bowl of popcorn, sit back and enjoy the show! It should be a good one! -Jeff Fabian

~ Autumn, the year's loviest smile~ William Cullen Bryant

The Cankerworm Strikes Back.

They are out there right now. Beneath our very noses they are waiting, biding their time, waiting for an exceptionally cold night. Waiting to crawl from the depths and ascend into your peacefully resting trees, only to rear their mandibles and consume precious new foliage in the spring. I am speaking of cankerworms of course.

With populations dwindling since the city's helicopter sprays of 2008, and a sense we were coming out of the darkest days of the cankerworm plague, they regrouped and counter attacked in force this past spring. Not only did they make a marked return to their original havens, but once again reigned terror upon new and distant areas; South, West, and East Charlotte, Waxhaw, Mathews, Davidson, Cornelius, and even in to South Carolina's Fort Mill and Rock Hill. We are taking orders for bands now, and encourage everyone to band their trees. Diligent banding is one of the best ways to keep the cankerworm population in check. Give us a call or visit our website to order bands online. <http://www.heartwoodtree.com/Services/Tree-Banding>

Fall Soil Nutrient Round Up.

As summer grows to a close, and winter inches ever closer, your trees are going through changes. Fall is a great time to apply our Fecund Forest deep root fertilizer. This time of year trees are making their last effort to store energy reserves for the coming spring. Trees are also using this milder time of year to recover from heat and drought stresses of the summer. Many commercially applied tree fertilizers are high in available nitrogen, which encourages fast and luscious new growth.

Now is not the time to apply that form of fertilizer. New growth in the late fall is susceptible to winter injury, which in turn may lead to growth complications in the spring. Our custom blended fall fertilizer is a complete blend, low in nitrogen, but high in organic matter and live beneficial soil organisms. Our goal is to promote sustainable tree health, not synthetic tree growth. Be proactive and help your trees 'bundle up' for winter.



Crown Reduction Pruning: A way to help prevent tree failure

This season we've seen a lot of tree failures. The wet spring saturated soils, giving way to root plate failures on many a large tree. The added weight from water soaked branches and leaves paved the way for large limb failures as well. There are ways to help reduce the risk of these types of failures. Reduction pruning is a method by which the crown of a tree's height, weight and spread are reduced. By creating shorter level arms and decreasing crown weight the more resilient a tree becomes against weather events.

What is crown reduction pruning?

Crown reduction pruning is the selective removal of large branches from a tree to diminish the height, spread, or crown weight of the tree.

This is different from 'topping,' as proper cuts are made to lateral branches and stems. This encourages wound closure and keeps natural crown form.

Why perform Crown Reduction Pruning?

Crown reduction pruning is performed for a variety of reasons. Due to planting space restrictions (ie courtyards or next to buildings), some trees require periodic crown reductions to maintain their size. Large mature trees probably benefit the greatest from crown reduction pruning. By maintaining crown; height, spread, and weight we can reduce the chances of large branch and/or whole tree failure.



By properly removing large branches we can also help the tree save energy in water, nutrient, and carbohydrate dispersal. It's a long way to get resources from the ground and disperse them in a 100ft tall tree with an 80ft wide canopy spread. Crown reduction combined with soil management and other integrated tree management strategies is a great way to keep our mature tree canopy around for years to come.



When should Crown Reduction Pruning take place?

Winter is an ideal time to perform this type of pruning. With the leaves off, we can see tree form and structure unhindered. Most diseases and insects are also dormant at this time, so there is less chance pruning wounds will come under attack by these potential pests.

If you love your trees give us a call, and one of our certified arborist can help you keep them safe and healthy.