

From The Roots Up

The Shrub & Tree Newsletter Of Prestige Shrub & Tree, Ltd

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COMING SOON:

Prestige will be utilizing RealGreen computer software to streamline our office and become a fully digital operation. As a part of this effort, we will be moving to become paperless. Please call our office or send your email to accounting@prestigestt.com to put an email on file.

This is your fifth scheduled visit for the year and your last insect, disease and mite control application until next spring. You will be seeing us out on the property one more time this year for your fall fertilization.

So far, our summer has been close to average with temperatures in the upper 80's into the low to mid 90's. The rainfall has tapered off somewhat being below average for the months of May and July. We are sitting at 28" with 5 months to go. No one knows what kind of fall we will have in terms of temperature and rainfall so it is important to continue to fill the gaps with drenching irrigation and watch for flagging or yellowing leaves as these can be signs the plants are getting dry.

With summer coming to a close, we will see less leaf spot disease but white fly will be hanging on and scale populations will continue to build. Although we treat for all these pests routinely, this last spray application targets these hard to manage pests to reduce overwintering populations of insects and reduce disease activity at the onset of fall.

The Fall Webworm can be problematic every year. We haven't seen much Fall Webworm just yet, but as autumn progresses, you will see more and more. It is very obvious in host trees such as sourwood and locust tree. Unlike other caterpillars, the webs will remain in the trees for quite some time after treatment but these caterpillars **do not inflict much damage and cause no lasting damage to the tree.**

As always, we'll be checking all of your landscape plants for problems and addressing them as needed.

Black Twig Borer

As with every summer, once trees start entering drought stress Twig Borers will become problematic. These nuisance insects are boring insects that seek out stressed trees for the purpose of laying eggs within the wood of the stems. In the Atlanta area, all types of magnolia seem to be one of their favorites though they do affect other trees as well. Unlike other borers that bore into the main limbs and the trunks of trees often killing sections or whole trees, twig borers stick to the outer twigs of the trees. These beetles find stressed trees since stressed trees can not offer quite as much of a defense against attack as healthy trees and bore into the twigs causing small holes in the wood. The adult female then lays her eggs in the end of the bored out gallery. To feed her young, she leaves a sticky substance called ambrosia. This ambrosia works to

clog up the xylem and phloem of the twig effectively cutting it off from water and nutrients killing the branch from the entry site outward.

Control of these pests can be tricky and require a bit of luck. While we do check for these pests and try to preventively treat for them, it is still a matter of luck if we succeed since the borers have to be active in the area for us to get a kill. The borers do not ingest the wood they bore into therefore rendering systemic insecticide options useless and since they do not ingest the wood, they must come in contact with our sprays to be controlled. Our regular treatments reduce their numbers but they can become problematic between visits. Fortunately, these pests do not do much damage to the tree though it can be unsightly leaving multiple branches with dead tips on the your otherwise lovely magnolia tree. If the damage is within reach, prune out the dead wood. This will promote new growth. Also, by pruning the dead wood out, it will make it easier for you to spot new damage signaling a return of these beetles. Lastly, since these beetles seek out stressed trees, use this as a signal that you should check the moisture under your trees and keep them hydrated (5 gallons water per 1" trunk diameter per week).

Afternoon and Early Evening Rainfall

The rain this summer has been hit or miss thundershowers so you need to carefully watch your

landscape for watering needs if we become dry again. The rainfall is not cumulative so once the rains cease, the soil dries and the plants rapidly move into drought stress, especially in hot weather. When we are getting a lot of scattered downpours, folks tend to forget to monitor the plant's water needs. Since many folks still don't water correctly, this problem needs to be addressed sooner versus later to reduce permanent damage. Keep in mind, afternoon downpours may look heavy and wet the ground but not all of this moisture hits the ground or makes it down to the roots. Big trees like cryptomeria or leylands and other over story trees block much of the rainfall from ever hitting the ground. What does make it to the ground is often evaporated before it can soak into the soil leaving under story plants dry in spite of the rains.

Consistent watering is the key to survival. The best way to reduce the stress and help the plants survive the heat is to water your trees, shrubs and turf one time per week to get 1" of irrigation. Irrigation systems vary but usually it takes 45 - 60 minutes per zone to get the 1" equivalency. Use a rain gauge to monitor the rainfall and your irrigation amount. DO NOT water every other day for 20 minutes as you will lose 50 - 100% of this water to evaporation! You will encourage shallow roots, leaf and root fungal diseases and winter kill as a result. One deep watering per week is what is needed for proper hydration. This should be your watering regimen all year except when we are above 95 degrees when you will need to water two times per week to get 1" for each watering to counteract the increased evaporation and increased water needs of the plants.

Yellow Leaves And Leaf Drop

If our weather dries out as it did the previous few years heading though the late summer into fall, we will begin to see quite a lot of yellow leaves on cherries as we progress through the summer heat. Soon to follow will be poplars, birches, dogwoods, sycamores, sweetgums and even pines. This leaf drop is normal and is the tree's response to a lack of sufficient water whether it be from lack of rainfall or inadequate or incorrect irrigation, restricted root systems or simply the summer heat. **We see this every year** and in some cases it is quite spectacular when a cherry, for instance, loses all of its leaves during the late summer. This should remind you to check for adequate soil moisture.

As we move towards fall, the changes in light we encounter also affect leaf drop. This leaf drop occurs long before the first frost and may cause alarm if you are not prepared.

Another phenomenon we see in late summer is scorch. This occurs on leaves when temperatures are very high and the plants are not getting adequate water.

Plant Spotlight: Contorted Filbert

Contorted Filbert, Harry Lauder's walking stick, twisted hazelnut trees or that weird twisty tree; whatever you wish to call it is a tree that we see every so often in landscapes as a potted specimen shrub. It holds interest due to its twisted and contorted limbs and branches.

Planting and growing a Contorted Filbert is quite like planting and growing other shrubs and plants. Water frequently to establish the tree into the soil and once established, provide heavy

infrequent watering especially during dry spells. These shrubs do well in US Dept. of Agriculture zones 3-9 essentially all areas of the country excluding the deserts and the extreme northern areas.

Contorted Filberts will tolerate slightly acidic or basic soil but does not tolerate heavy clay. Soil amendments should be used to avoid planting in areas of clay. This is also important since this shrub and most others can tolerate moist soil but want well drained soil so their roots are not sitting in water. When selecting a spot for your tree, Filbert shrubs can thrive in partial shade but prefer full sun and can grow to 10-15 ft tall and wide.

Once your Filbert is installed and established, the male of the species will provide tan or yellowish cream colored blooms in the early spring and tan catkins in the late spring. If you purchase the Red Majestic variety, the leaves will be maroon/red through the summer time.

Lastly, Contorted Filberts are not without their problems. Some care must be taken to minimize problems such as japanese beetles, scale, blight and can be susceptible to canker during the wet weather. Applications of systemic insecticides can reduce scale problems and fungicides used to reduce blight. Also, Contorted Filbert trees that are grafted from different root stock must have any sucker growth cut out.

Contorted Filberts can be used as hedges and found as perimeter plants. Often times I see them being used in the center of another feature in a large planter that allows their interesting and unique form to be on display.