

From The Roots Up

The Shrub & Tree Newsletter Of Prestige Shrub & Tree, Ltd.
www.prestigestt.com 770-476-7781

Final Visit for the Year
Fall Weather Report
Proper Mulching
Plant Spotlight: Viburnum
2025 price increase notice

Volume 40, No. 6 Copyright 2024 by Prestige Shrub & Tree, Ltd. ® Use With Permission Only

Remember, we will automatically continue your service next season unless you call to discontinue. You may also pay your bill at Prestigestt.com!

This fall fertilization is your sixth scheduled visit for the year and your last shrub and tree visit until 2026. Prestige incorporates not only organic additives but also a water usage enhancement adjuvant into our fertilization programs. We utilize the best and most efficacious technology in our programs to garner the best possible results for your landscape.

As always, consistent watering is the key to healthy plants even as we progress into fall.

Fall Weather Report

As I write this newsletter in the very beginning of October, we are sitting at 33.99" of rain though September's number has not been posted. September was rather dry as we enjoyed lower temperatures and humidity but not a lot of rain. We noticed many of our clients have turned off their irrigation systems due to the above average rain amounts through the

summer season and the unexpected cooler than normal August. As we moved into fall however, our rains in September became very sporadic and inconsistent putting us into a fall drought. Consequently, many plants moved into drought stress since many folks were not watering or had their irrigation turned off! Once we start to experience dry conditions, we begin to see the trees start their leaf drop. Some trees, such as cherries, sycamores and tulip poplars are especially sensitive and are the first to abscise. Many landscape plants are struggling in our mini drought and have started to drop leaves. We have received many calls concerning plants "dying" due to yellowing leaves and die back. Most of the time, we arrive to test the soil and find it dusty dry. At this time of year, your plants have been treated with both systemic and contact insecticides and fungicides and are inoculated against most insect and disease issues. Die back of branches or other parts of plants almost always has to do with water either too much or too little. Monitor your rainfall at home and provide deep irrigation during dry spells and just because its cool or even cold, your plants still need the

water over the "off season".

As always, consistent watering is the key to healthy plants even as they are moving into winter.

Fall Shrub Mulching

Proper mulching is essential for maintaining healthy plants. We occasionally still see mulch volcanoes around many trees and thick mulch layers around shrubs. Mulching is about retaining moisture in the soil and protecting roots in winter, not about burying the bases of the plants and root systems.

In the case of trees, deep mulch layers that bury the trunks result in bark deterioration and damage from disease causing fungi such as Rhizoctonia. Thick mulch layers on top of root systems encourage excessive growth of mycelium (fungal roots) from both beneficial and non-beneficial fungi. These fungi form a waterproof barrier that essentially seals off water penetration to the plant roots resulting in irreversible drought damage to the trees and shrubs. This is an example of too much of a good thing!

Fine-textured mulches reduce soil moisture loss better than coarse-textured mulches. Good mulches to use are pine straw, bark chips or ground hardwood mulch. Avoid large

nugget pine bark, rock, gravel and marble. If you use pine straw, add enough to bring the level back to 3". If you use bark, a 1" - 2" final thickness is adequate.

1. If your old mulch layer is thick and matted, rake it off and replace with new mulch. Old rotted mulch can form a waterproof layer!
2. Do not place the mulch right up to the base of the plant but leave a few inches of space between the mulch and the base or crown of the plant.
3. Remove any debris or mulch that has built up in the crown (base) of plants. We often see plants, especially boxwoods, with mulch and or leaf debris built up in the base of plants. This debris works to break down the crown of the plant and after a short time can cause the top of the plant to die off in sections. This is especially true with boxwoods and can lead to volutella fungal issues and decline.
4. Be sure to kill the turf around the base of trees situated in your lawn and place a mulch ring around the base. This will prevent lawn mower and weed eater damage to the tree trunk.
5. Both pine straw and bark have advantages and disadvantages. Surface water flow (bark will float) and general cosmetic preferences are all things to be considered.
6. We do not recommend the

use of grass clippings or saw dust for mulches as they can also mat and seal the soil surface and prevent water penetration. If you come across some free wood chips, you can use them as a mulch. Research indicates that these uncomposted tree chips will not rob your plant of nitrogen or cause overheating as they compost. Regardless of which mulch you choose, proper mulching is an important component of the path to healthy plants.

Plant Spotlight: Viburnum

In this edition of plant spotlight, we are going to look at Viburnum. Viburnums can be grown in various sites in full sun or partial sunlight. It is important to know that though these plants can grow in partial sun environments, they do best and produce the most flowers and berries in full sun conditions. These plants are deer resistant, drought tolerant, and can be utilized for erosion control on the side of hills.

Viburnum has over 150 varieties including popular Snowball bush and Doublefile viburnums. Some of these plants produce a light fragrance such as the Korean Spice variety. Some varieties produce red, purple, blue or black berries with white or pink flower bunches that can bloom anytime from early spring to late summer dependent on the specific variety. If pruning is needed, be sure to prune immediately after blooming to avoid cutting off next year's buds.

When planting a Viburnum, keep in mind their growth habit

can be a bit erratic or free form. Depending on the variety, they can require 3 to 12 ft of space and can grow from 3 to 20 ft tall. While they can be pruned to hold a certain shape or size, they prefer to grow in their natural shape and size so pick a variety that suits your area the best.

Lastly, Viburnums are relatively pest and disease resistant though if planted in the shade can develop black leaf spot. Viburnums make a wonderful addition to any garden or landscape.

Price increases for next year

As we are all painfully aware, our economic realities have provided us with surging prices for just about everything. We at Prestige try our best to absorb some of the rising costs associated with doing business whether it be from the increased costs of our chemicals and fertilizers or the cost of putting gas in our trucks. Unfortunately, we must eventually charge more for our services to keep our business operational. As we have done in the past, we will hold off on raising prices until the end of the year so our customers can reliably budget for our services in their household expenditures. We will be raising the cost of our current programs to match the increasing costs of the products we build our programs on. We will also need to bring older accounts up to current minimum pricing. While no one likes increasing prices, we thank you for your understanding and appreciate your continued business into the next year.