



Branchin' Out

Choosing & Caring for Your Christmas Tree

When selecting a cut tree, watch for these signs that the tree is too far-gone.

- *Needles are a dull, grayish-green color*
- *Needles fail to ooze pitch when broken apart and squeezed*
- *Needles feel stiff and brittle*
- *Needles pull easily off tree*

Once you have your tree home, re-cut the trunk about one inch above the original cut. This will open up clogged, water-conducting tissues. Immediately place the trunk in warm water.

Place the tree in as cool a spot as possible. Avoid areas near fireplaces, wood-burning stoves, heat ducts and television

sets, as the heat will result in excess water loss. Use of miniature lights will produce much less heat and reduce drying of the tree. Make sure the reservoir stays filled. If the reservoir loses enough water where the bottom of the trunk is

exposed, the trunk will need to be re-cut. Adding aspirins, copper pennies, soda pop,

sugar and bleach to the water reservoir have not been shown to prolong the life of a tree.

Use a stand with adequate water holding capacity for the tree. As a general rule, stands should provide one quart of water per inch of stem diameter. Look for stands that hold approximately a gallon of water. Check the stand daily to make sure that the level of water does not go below the base of the tree.

When the season is over and it's time to take the tree down, there are a few options as to what you can do with it. If you have a pond or lake, trees make excellent refuge and feeding areas. Go to www.realchristmastrees.org and type in your zip code to find a recycling program near you.

If you choose a living Christmas tree, be sure to dig the planting hole before the ground freezes. Mulch the hole and backfill soil to keep the soil from freezing. Live trees should

not be kept inside for more than three days. Longer periods may cause them to lose dormancy resulting in severe injury when planted outside. You may wish to tag the tree at the nursery and then pick it up a couple days before Christmas. After Christmas, move the tree to an unheated garage for several days to acclimate it to outside temperatures. After planting, water well and leave some mulch in place to prevent the soil water from freezing and becoming unavailable for plant uptake.



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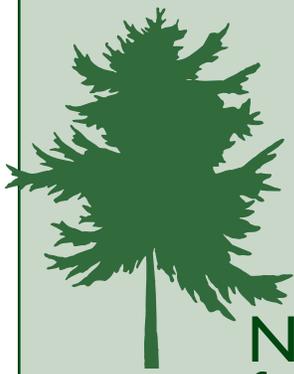
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News from the Top

**News & Advice from Gary Allen,
President of Allen's Tree Service**



All of us here at Allen's Tree Service Inc are proud to be members in good standing with the St. Louis Arborist Association. The association started in 1954 with just a handful of members and has grown to over 25

St. Louis area tree companies.

The St. Louis Arborist Association meets monthly to discuss current tree and shrub problems, and to arrive at uniform treatments. Some of the goals of the organization are to improve the practice of tree preservation; stimulate a greater interest in the planting and preservation of ornamental trees; cooperate in the conservation of trees and in the beautification of the countryside; initiate and foster scientific investigation into various tree and shrub problems; disseminate information, instruction and knowledge to the public concerning tree preservation; secure better cooperation among all arborists and related agencies through educational methods; and adopt all standards established and insure all members adhere to these practices.

For this past year I have been serving as Vice President of the St. Louis Arborist Association. It has been a very rewarding experience and I am looking forward to continuing to serve as an active member of this organization.

Tree Leaves & Your Lawn

Leaves are rapidly falling from deciduous trees, so it's a good time to stop and think about options for handling the litter. Although a scattering of leaves will do no harm to the lawn, a thick cover will prevent sunlight from reaching turf grass plants. Lack of sunlight can prevent plants from making the energy needed to survive the winter.

Composting is a great way to make use of tree leaves. The compost can then be used in the vegetable garden and flowerbeds. However, if you do not compost, you

can mow the leaves with a mulching mower and simply let shredded leaves filter into the turf canopy. (A side-discharged mower also works, although it won't do as thorough a job of shredding the leaves.) This method will be most effective if done often enough so that the leaf litter doesn't become too thick. In other words, mow while you can still see grass peaking through the leaves. Some may wonder whether this practice will hurt the lawn in the long run, researchers at Michigan State University say no.

WATER BEFORE WINTER!

To protect perennial plants from winter damage, it is important that they go into winter with the soil in a moist condition. Since we have had a dry fall in many areas of St. Charles we need to think about watering. Although all perennial plants will benefit from watering during a dry fall, it is especially important for evergreens because moisture is easily lost from the foliage and newly planted trees and shrubs have limited root systems.

A good, deep watering with moisture reaching at least a foot down into the soil is much better than several light sprinklings that just wet the top portions of the soil. This will ensure that the majority of roots have access to water. We must rely on roots that are deeper, and provide more moisture for them to absorb.

Landscape plants may need some additional water to survive the winter unscathed. Newly transplanted woody plants and evergreens should be first on your list. Be sure to water all of the area from the trunk

to the edge of the outermost branches (called the drip line), and not just near the trunk. Water to a depth of 8-12 inches, the depth can be checked with a metal rod or dowel rod. Wait until the temperature is above freezing and the soil is unfrozen so the water will soak in.

Deciduous plants (those that drop their leaves) will need to be watered about once per month if there isn't significant precipitation. Evergreens such as pines and junipers as well as recently transplanted trees and shrubs will need water about once every two weeks. Also, plants with a limited root system such as those near sidewalks will need to be watered more frequently than those in green areas.



How Leaves Change Color

A green leaf is green because of the presence of a group of pigments known as chlorophyll. When they are abundant in the leaf's cells, as they are during the growing season, the chlorophylls' green color dominates and masks out the colors of any other pigments that may be present in the leaf. Summer leaves are characteristically green.

The chlorophylls have a vital function; they capture some of the sun's energy and use it to manufacture the plant's food – simple sugars which are produced from water and carbon dioxide. These sugars are the basis of the plant's nourishment – the sole source of the carbohydrates needed for growth and development.

In their food-manufacturing process, the chlorophylls themselves break down and thus are being continually "used up". During the growing season, however, the plant replenishes the chlorophyll so that the supply remains high and the leaves stay green.

But as autumn approaches, certain influences, both inside and outside the plant, cause the chlorophylls to be replaced

at a slower rate than they are being used. During this period, the total supply of chlorophyll is gradually dwindling, and the "masking" effect slowly fades away. Then other pigments that have been present (along with the chlorophylls) in the cells all during the leaf's life begin to show through. These are the carotenoids: they give us colorations of yellow, brown, orange, and the many hues in between.

The reds, purples, and their blended combinations that decorate autumn foliage come from another group of pigments in the cells called the anthocyanins. These pigments are not present in the leaf throughout the growing season as are the carotenoids. They develop in late summer in the sap of the cells on the leaf, and this development is the result of complex interactions of many influences – both inside and outside the plant. Their formation depends on the breakdown of sugars in the presence of bright light as the level of a certain chemical (phosphate) in the leaf is reduced.

During the summer growing season, phosphate is at a high level. It has a vital role in the breakdown of the sugars manufactured by chlorophyll.

But in the fall, phosphate, along with the other chemicals and nutrients, moves out of the leaf into the stem of the plant. When this happens, the sugar-breakdown process changes, leading to the production of anthocyanin pigments. The brighter the light during this period, the greater the production of anthocyanins and the more brilliant the resulting color display that we see. When the days of autumn are bright and cool, the nights chilly, but not freezing, the brightest colorations usually develop.

Anthocyanins temporarily color the edges of some of the very young leaves as they unfold from the buds in early spring. They also give the familiar color to such common fruits as cranberries, red apples, purple grapes, blueberries, cherries, strawberries, and plums.

In our autumn forests they show up vividly in the maples, oaks, sourwood,

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We'd Love to Hear from You!

Allen's Tree Service Inc is happy to assist you with any services you may need more information about. Mark the items you are interested in and mail this to the address below or just give us a call – we look forward to hearing from you.

I am interested in...

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tree/Limb Removal | <input type="checkbox"/> Mulch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Selective Pruning | <input type="checkbox"/> Dead Wooding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deep Root Fertilization | <input type="checkbox"/> Stump Grinding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insect/Disease Control | <input type="checkbox"/> Land/Lot Clearing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horticulture Oil Spray | <input type="checkbox"/> Growth Regulators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sweetgum Ball Control (Nuisance Fruit Eliminator) | |

Name _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Additional Questions/Information: _____



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Sweetgum, dogwood, tupelo, black gum, and persimmon. These same pigments often combine with the carotenoids' colors to give us the deeper orange, fiery reds, and bronzes typical of many hardwood species.

The carotenoids occur, along with the chlorophyll pigments, in tiny structures called plastids, within the cells of leaves. Sometimes they are in such abundance in the leaf that they give a plant a yellow-green color, even during the summer. But usually we become aware of their presence for the first time in autumn, when the leaves begin to lose their chlorophyll.

Their brilliant yellows and oranges tint the leaves of such hardwood species as hickories, ash, maple, yellow poplar, aspen, birch, black cherry, sycamore, cottonwood, sassafras, and alder.

This information came from the US Forestry publication called "Autumn Colors".

Branchin' Out Again... And Again

Serving St. Charles and surrounding counties for over 30 years, we provide quality tree work with integrity. Three years ago we started our **Tree Health Care Program**, two years ago we started **Allen's Wood Recycling**, now we are proud to announce the beginning of a new program – **Complete Tree & Lawn Care**. This program will be individually tailored to your lawn and landscape needs. We will offer grass cutting, edging, trimming, fertilizing, aeration, overseeding, weed and crab grass control, insect control, leaf removal, mulching, landscape bed maintenance, and many more services.

There are many benefits to turning over the care of your lawn to professionals. You will not only be able to reap the environmental benefits of having a well-maintained lawn, but you will also be able

to enjoy more leisure time with family and friends. Your well maintained property can add anywhere from five to fifteen percent to your homes value.

As professionals we stay up to date with current fertilizer and pest technology, we require all of our lawn care professionals to attend classes and educational seminars conducted by universities or professional lawn care associations.

Your lawn is unique and one-of-a-kind, with its own set of needs and requirements, which is why you need an integrated lawn care plan.

We have been in your neighborhoods for the last 30 years, and we are just as committed today as we were when we started to providing top quality, professional personalized service.



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"Branchin' Out" is published quarterly to bring you information that will make your life easier and more enjoyable. We would appreciate it if you would pass this newsletter along to friends and relatives who might be in need of any of our services. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or would like to request an additional issue of "Branchin' Out" please call or visit us online.

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