

Let's Talk Trees

Ethics

Loyalty

Integrity

Quality of Life



Northwest Plant Health Care, Inc.

Fall 2007

What's New

It's hard to believe how fast the summer has gone by! I hope you've all had a chance to escape the heat this summer and spend time with family and friends.

In the fall and winter months we concentrate our efforts on pruning. This season's focus is not only on providing the highest quality tree care and landscape services, but also on training our arborists to offer the highest level of customer service possible. Mind you, this is a process, so as we improve in these areas, we appreciate your patience.

The old business axiom goes like this: "For every happy client, they tell 5 friends, but for every unhappy client, they tell 20 friends!" I want to reiterate to you, our valuable clients, that we are still committed to being the best tree care company in the Inland Northwest. You are the judge of BEST, so if ever we don't meet your expectations, please tell us—we will always make it right! We appreciate your feedback. Your kind notes attached to your payments keep us motivated and connected. Thank you so much.

On another note, those of you in neighborhoods with Homeowner or Neighborhood Associations (or just good old-fashioned neighborly connections), call me. We are currently arranging and booking neighborhood tree pruning projects with significant group discounts. This comes on the heels of a successful neighborhood pruning project on the 600 & 700 blocks of West 20th in Spokane. Go by and take a look. These beautiful trees (London Plane trees) that the neighbors decided were worth caring for, really look great and it makes the whole neighborhood a much nicer place.

In care of trees,

President

Mark Your Calendars!

Garden Fountain Workshop

10/4, 6-9pm, \$30
Spokane Art School
More Info: (509) 328-0900

Managing Natural Areas on Small Acreages—Spokane County Ext.

10/4, 11, 18, and 25; 7-9pm
More Info: Janean Creighton, (509) 477-2199

Fall Leaf Festival

10/8, 11am-2pm, FREE
Finch Arboretum
Learn to compost and get a free bin!
More Info: (509) 624-4832

Home Idea Show

10/12 - 10/14, Fri-Sat 12-8, Sun 10-5
Spokane Fair & Expo Center
Adults \$6, Seniors \$4
Children 12 and under FREE
More Info: www.spokanecounty.org

To Do Now

- Soil Injections
- Fertilize your trees
- Fall clean-up and pruning
- Spider Barriers
- Call Joe for a deal on discounted, high-quality plants!

A Cool Crowd

The Community Gardens of Spokane are growing...and you can join in. The organization started in 1990 and is truly beginning to blossom. Urban areas need gardens and local residents need healthy food. Smaller gardens help individual families and larger gardens support the community through Second Harvest. Many organizations have donated time, materials, and/or helpers to get these gardens established.

If you love to garden and would like to offer support, call 509-534-6678, or visit www.spokanegardens.com. One of our local gardening experts, Pat Munz, is the coordinator.

(509) 892-0110 ■ (208) 687-2884 ■ nphc@icehouse.net

Landscaping with Native Plants

The use of native plants in our urban landscapes has been steadily growing in popularity in the past few years, and with good reason. There are many benefits to this trend, both environmentally and economically. Although native plants may initially cost more to purchase, the long term cost of maintaining an attractive, healthy, and long lasting landscape is greatly reduced.

Once established, native plants require less water than non-natives. Less water means less money spent—good for you and good for the environment.

Native plants generally are low maintenance plants, if time is taken to ensure that the plants chosen are adequate for the intended site. They need less pruning and fertilizing over the years than cultivated varieties; and the need for chemicals to control insects and/or diseases is also greatly reduced.

Although they may attract insects or

diseases, they are typically not at high enough populations to cause serious concern. Many of the pests of native plant species also have natural predators that keep the damaging pests under control—to the point that we often don't even notice the pests were there at all.

“Crew did a super job and were very professional. I am pleased with the work.”

R.L., Spokane, WA

The attraction of wildlife is also an important reason for choosing native plants. Our native wildlife depends on native plants for their survival.

Butterflies, hummingbirds, and Quail are but a few species that will take refuge on your land if it is planted with native food and cover.

When selecting native plants, follow the rule: right plant, right place. Take time to notice how the sun moves through your property, and make note of any micro-climates that may exist. Find out what type of soil

you have. Is it the same in all areas, or does it change? Does it hold water, or is it draining freely? These things will affect the types of plants you should choose and whether they simply survive, or thrive.

With this information in hand, now's the time to research and choose which plants are best suited for our conditions. NPHC horticultural experts will be happy to assist you with this process.

When choosing plants, have fun with colors and textures so the changing seasons offer more variety in your landscape. You will be glad you did!

by Becky Phillips



Ben's Bistro ~ A Unique and Flavorful Dish!

Mixed Seafood Ceviche

Makes 4 servings (medium-hot)

Ceviche is a seafood dish that marinates the fish in a citrus-based sauce. Lemons and limes are the traditional citrus ingredients. The citrus acid pickles or "cooks" the fish without heat. It is a native dish of Peru, but is available throughout South America. There are enumerable variations of this recipe depending on region of influence, so adjust the ingredients to suit your taste!

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 3/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 hot chili peppers, such as habanera or jalapeño with seeds and stems removed—finely diced or to taste.
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 large red onion, sliced paper thin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

- 1/2 pound white fish filets, cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1 pound cleaned shrimp and/or scallops
- 1 teaspoon cumin (optional)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- 4 large Bibb lettuce leaves, rinsed and patted dry

Combine all the ingredients, except the lettuce, in a large ceramic bowl. Mix well. If the citrus juice doesn't completely cover the fish, add more. Cover tightly and refrigerate for a minimum of 5 hours and up to 10 hours. The fish will be firm and opaque all the way through.

After the fish is done marinating or "cooking," put one lettuce leaf on each plate, and drain the fish in a colander to remove the marinade.

Arrange the fish on top of the lettuce leaf and serve with tortilla chips, cooked sliced sweet potatoes, or rounds of corn on the cob.

"Ask the Tree Care Experts"

Q: How do I tell if my plant is doing poorly because of the heat or because of lack of water?

A: Heat stress is a physiological condition exhibited by curling or folding of leaves, early fall color of leaves, wilting, browning, or scorching of soft tissues (generally leaves or needles, especially at the branch tips). This condition is caused by excessively high temperatures often coupled with low humidity, and is due to temperatures being above a given species natural adaptive range. Important: heat stress can occur regardless of soil moisture levels!

Drought stress is an acute or chronic lack of water given to a plant, resulting in many of the same symptoms as heat stress. It can also result in twigginess and large limb death, typically initiating from the extremities, and may lead to the death of the entire plant. Drought stress can magnify the impact of heat stress on a plant.

Q: What are the grotesque bugs "tenting" in my tree?

A: In the summer months we typically see small, infrequent infestations of Western tent caterpillar (*Malacosoma californicum*). These insects congregate inside silken tents on branches of various trees and plants, including hawthorn, birch, cottonwood, willow, various fruit trees, and roses. They can defoliate the limbs of trees, although leaves often re-grow once the caterpillars pupate and become adult moths. This pest is considered relatively benign in terms of plant damage unless multiple large tents are found in a single plant or if infestations persist over consecutive seasons. The best management practice is to prune out the infested limbs, or leave as prey for birds or small mammals. For larger populations, spray applications are most effective when caterpillars are small, which is usually in early summer.

by Ben Kappen



**Alerting all campers*
Tent Caterpillars spotted in vicinity!*

Who's Hot!



DOROTHY HALL...the smile behind the warm voice at NPHC! Dorothy, our Administrative Assistant, joined NPHC in the spring of this year. She supports our Office Manager, Shauna, in a variety of duties. As our facilitator, and a key spoke in the wheel, Dorothy keeps us connected to you, our customers.

Dorothy moved around a lot while growing up, but one of her favorite homes was the 300 acre farm in Vermont. She spent a lot of time exploring the woods, and loved to sit under a tree and watch wildlife. Today, Dorothy still loves trees. She also loves photography and the adventure of camping and hiking in the woods.

Dorothy's son lives in the Spokane area with his wife and five children. She enjoys her family immensely and especially loves to let the grandkids use her camera—always interesting to see what they photograph from their perspective!

What's Not!

Powdery Mildew...

we've all seen it—on our roses, maples and even perennials. It starts as white spots that look like talcum powder, and can spread over the entire plant. It discolors leaves, causes stunted growth on all plant parts, and can lead to early leaf drop. This fungal infection is promoted by high relative humidity, lack of air flow, and overall weakened plant health. It becomes most visible in late spring or early summer. Powdery mildew spores (reproductive cells of certain plant species) can remain dormant during the winter-time on infected debris, such as fallen leaves, and will re-activate in spring. They can be spread by wind, splashing water, and insects. Control is best achieved when cultural (routine garden management practices) and chemical methods are combined.

The best cultural control that you can do now is remove all potentially contaminated leaf debris. Chemical control should begin at first sign of infection, then every 7 to 14 days during the season. Infected plants should be treated with a fungicidal spray. Horticulture soaps can be used, but only during moderate temperatures since soaps can potentially harm plants in high heat. Please feel free to call us with any questions.

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P.O. Box 1978
Post Falls, ID 83877
509-892-0110
208-687-2884

www.NorthwestPlantHealthCare.com

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Reasons to Prune

Traditionally, pruning was referred to as trimming, and was considered by many to be a struggle between plant and man. The plant's goal was to take the form determined by its genetic disposition. The trimmer's goal, it seemed, was to prune the plant into submission in order to reach a picturesque form (usually perfectly shaped and unnaturally rounded).

Thankfully, there has been a new-found awareness in the public and professional community that proper pruning can positively influence plant health, longevity, aesthetics, and growth rate. Coincidentally, these are also the objectives considered when practicing good plant health care.

Many trees planted in the landscape contain structural defects made at the nursery level. Therefore, pruning trees should begin when the plant is young. Failure to start the pruning process when a tree is

young may result in a mature tree that is unsound and has weakly attached limbs.

Trees that have been improperly pruned are at risk and may eventually become unsafe. **Topping, making flush cuts, lion tailing, and unnecessary thinning** are all practices that contribute to the **demise** of a tree.

These practices as well as injuries from natural factors may result in large amounts of dead wood, broken or hanging limbs, double stems (which were notorious in pre-ice storm pine trees), overly weighted branches, and branches with significant cracks or decay. Fortunately, many of these hazards can be mitigated by implementing proper pruning techniques.

Risk mitigation is obviously important in the tree care industry, but aesthetics is equally important. If a tree is pleasing to the eye it is likely

to be retained. It is amazing how much better a Ponderosa pine looks after its dead wood is pruned out.

I think many arborists would agree that ultimately, pruning is about training plants to reach their full potential and beauty within their given surroundings.



Over time, a balance between the environment and the plant's natural growth habit can be reached, resulting in a more natural-looking landscape full of healthy plants.

by Ben Larson