

# Let's Talk Trees



Northwest Plant Health Care, Inc.

Fall 2008

## What's New

Like you, our family is adjusting back to the fall routines. Our youngest, Nicki, is a big kindergartener and especially excited to be riding on the same bus with his older brothers, Forest and Ben.

We just had our big company party at our house, a Mexican fiesta beyond compare. We are so blessed to have such great people working for us—now 21 people. When did that happen? As always, we greatly appreciate each of you and the trust you have in us. We stand strongly committed to caring for your landscape for years to come.

You may have noticed that on our estimates for pruning we are assessing a fuel surcharge. We decided not to do this on PHC services (spraying and fertilizing). The prices for these visits were pre-arranged and it didn't seem fair to tack on a surcharge. We have received numerous notices from our vendors notifying us of cost increases. Our fuel costs have doubled since this time last year, fertilizer prices have doubled, and some products have tripled in the last 6 months! Even though we are resisting the pressure to raise prices, we will not be able to maintain current rates for long. We haven't raised our prices for landscaping/planting since 2001!

I suppose all of this is an attempt to say, if you are thinking of having a landscape or tree pruning project completed in the next year or so, now is the time to get on the schedule, **before the end of the year**. We look forward to talking with you soon.

In Care of Trees,

President

**"We appreciate your listening to us and your quick response. We have already recommended you to others due to the great customer service."**

*T. & M. S., Spokane, WA*

## To Do Now:

- Fertilize new trees
- Prune trees and shrubs
- Apply pre-emergent treatments to beds
- Finish those summer landscape projects

## Kate's Kitchen

### Sweet Sausage & Broccoli Rabe Pasta . . . A Light Step into Fall Eating

1 lb. rotelle pasta (I like whole wheat)  
 1 lb. bulk sweet Italian sausage  
 2 tsp. minced garlic  
 2 1/2 c. chicken broth  
 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes  
 1 head broccoli rabe, trim ends  
 4 tbs. unsalted butter  
 1 1/2 c. shredded parmesan  
 Salt & fresh ground pepper to taste

**Pasta:** Cook pasta to desired firmness while starting sauce.

**Sauce:** Cook sausage until browned over medium heat in large saucepan, about 7 minutes. Add garlic and cook another minute. Add broth and red pepper and bring to a boil. Add broccoli rabe, cover and cook until tender, about 4 minutes.

Stir in butter and parmesan and cook uncovered until sauce thickens, about 2 more minutes. Add the cooked pasta to sauce pan and toss. Season to taste with salt & fresh ground pepper—serve immediately and enjoy!

Great, fast, easy one-plate supper!  
Kate Zubaly

# The Right Plant for the Right Place

Finding the perfect plant for your landscape can be a daunting task. It requires much forethought and insight. Do not be discouraged if you've made mistakes in the past. The following tips will help you avoid some of the most common mistakes.

Take some time to think about the purpose the plant will serve. Trees and shrubs can serve many functions including privacy screens, energy conservation, shade, beautification and wildlife habitat. The planting site will be more obvious if the function of the desired plant is clearly identified. Locating a planting site first, will make the task of choosing a plant easier.

Before even opening a book or going to a nursery, consider the environment around a selected planting site. How much sun does the site get? Are there any overhead obstructions? What is the soil composition? How much room is available? Answering these questions will result in a better fit.

One of the most common mistakes when planting is the failure to consider the mature size of the tree or shrub. It is difficult to visualize the mature version of the plant,

but never-the-less it is necessary. Planting a tree or shrub in a confined area will hinder the plant from reaching its full aesthetic potential and may lead to other more serious problems.

Finally, it may be useful to over-plant trees or shrubs initially, just as long as they are removed when they have out-grown their respective area. For example, in the past, property owners around the Spokane area often used blue spruces as privacy screens because they are dense but have a more natural appeal than an arborvitae hedge. However, once the mature spruces are over crowded, they need to be thinned in order to re-space them appropriately.

If a plan such as this is implemented and carried out, it can result in a desirable planting scenario. Conversely, if the trees are not removed it can result in overcrowding and lead to problems such as pests and diseases.

Plantings are long-term investments; invest wisely. It may take a little time and effort to match the plant with its perfect site, but your plants and your arborist will thank you in the end.

*Ben Larsen*



## COOL CROWD

A new trend in backyard entertaining is the propane fire pit. Auto Rain, a longstanding Inland Northwest vendor, has a fabulous line of these popular new propane fire pits. You can have an attractive, safe, legal fire. It has no smoke to burn your eyes, and no air-borne particles floating off into the dry grass. At less than a gallon per hour on high, they are fairly efficient too.

They offer freestanding units, which can be finished with a variety of materials. Others can be incorporated into an in-ground design surrounded by your favorite hardscape. There are a few different burners available that are set in a lava type rock, and are made of iron, or stainless steel.

Call Scott Young at Auto Rain directly at 509-847-0060 or let us help you incorporate this popular design into your landscape.

## Mark your Calendars

### Home Idea Show

Spokane Fair & Expo Center

**October 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> Fri: 12-8, Sat: 10-8, Sun: 10-5**

Stop by to see us at # 414, it is a fabulous show!

### Annual Fall Leaf Festival

Family fun and educational including composting

**October 18<sup>th</sup> 11am-2pm**

Directions # 509-624-4832

### WSU Ext. Specialty Landscaping Classes:

Water Wise Watering, Xeriscaping,  
Landscaping with Native Plants , Rain Gardens

**September 20—October 11 Saturdays 10-12**

Register:# 509-477-2048

## "Ask The Tree Care Experts"

### Q: My tree is failing, should we fertilize it this fall?

**A:** Plants with severe deficiencies should be addressed ASAP regardless of the season as long as the plant can absorb the fertilizer. Care should be taken to adjust specific nutrient levels and make sure water is available to the plant.

Fertilizing may be coupled with specific treatments such as insecticidal soil injection to improve chemical uptake. Some products actually specify the use of fertilizer applied with the product in the fall for better results.

### Q: Why is fall a good time to transplant trees?

**A:** Cooler ambient air temperatures and higher humidity mean less water loss through leaves and needles. This means that the remaining root system can more easily provide the water to keep buds, leaves and twigs intact.

However, Fall's relatively warm soil temperatures mean active root development and mycorrhizal (beneficial soil fungi) growth. As soon as the plant is moved, it can begin to re-establish its root system.

In the spring, as the plant begins to grow, the plant can acclimate to hot dry summer weather more gradually, resulting in less wilt, scorch and dieback of soft tissues.

*Ben Kappen*



Who's Hot

### Jeni Cooper Smith

Jeni's client's rave about her ability to be both thorough and efficient resulting in valuable plant care services for them. Originally from Spirit Lake, Jeni has an AAS Horticulture degree in Greenhouse/Nursery from Spokane Community College, is an ISA Certified Arborist, and a Licensed Pesticide Applicator. This is her third season as a Plant Health Care Specialist with Northwest Plant Health Care.

Jeni's passion is working outdoors to keep trees and plants healthy. She is also the proud mother of three girls, ages 8, 13, and 14. When not working, she enjoys reading, going to the beach, and spending time with her daughters.

What's Not

### Weeds & Creepy Crawlies

...come along with the Northwest's rugged environment. Spiders and ants top the list. Ants get into our food and spiders are unpleasant and potentially dangerous. A great way to combat these pests is to have a spider/ant barrier sprayed around your house. We also recommend using indoor traps and bug bombs, but without the barrier, pests can return in greater numbers. Weeds are also a big problem for most of us and the best way to start a comprehensive management program is to use a pre-emergent. A pre-emergent is to stop weeds from germinating and also kills some seeds. We suggest a shrub bed weed management program that will protect your plants and trees while killing the weeds.

*Thorin Brown*

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Landscape Design and Construction · Sprinkler Repair**

## *Fire Safe Landscapes*

*We've provided some selected highlights. For more complete information, go to: [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)*

As the Inland Northwest continues to grow into more rural and wooded areas, a major component in landscape design is “defensible space” — a specially planned zone around your home that provides maneuvering space for firefighters, serves as a barrier to impede raging wildfires from getting to your doorstep, and prevents house fires from spreading to the wild.

The most common defensible space is a perimeter with a 100 foot radius surrounding your home. This space is broken into zone 1-the first 30 ft. and zone 2 -the next 70 ft. While some tips are exclusive to zone 1: such as keeping trees and shrubs from contacting the building and cleaning out gutters, many tips are universal for both zones 1 and 2. Any remaining property falls into zone 3 and 4 and concentrates on the thinning of forested areas and removal of litter.

A common misconception is that defensible space landscaping calls for the stripping of visually appealing trees and

plants. Instead, defensible space uses the judicious selection and placement of plantings as a strategy to decrease the spread of fires. Tree roots actually reduce the risk of erosion after a fire. Using native plants offers fire-wise traits of being easy to maintain and naturally fire resistant. Try to select some trees that are low in resin and sap content with no rough bark.

Another consideration is replacing some shrubs with less flammable ground covers. In an area with high fire potential, consider the slope of your land and keeping trees and plant clusters clear of one another. Fire is known to travel via plants easier on a slope than a flat surface. Incorporating fuel breaks like gravel and stone also assists in impeding approaching flames.

Maintaining your property is crucial to being fire safe. Removal of excess plants, deadwood, or dead plants from your defensible space is a good start. Proper pruning can reduce the encroach-

ing of trees into buildings or other plants. Elimination of “fuels” such as needles, leaves, and plant waste should be a regular on your to-do list.

Like with any precautions, your personal tastes and risk perception enter into how aggressive your efforts should be. Let one of our ISA Certified Arborists come review your opportunity areas while still considering the investment, function, and aesthetics of your landscape.

*Nathan Zeigler*



[www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)