

# Let's Talk Trees

Ethics

Loyalty

Integrity

Quality of Life

## Northwest Plant Health Care, Inc.

### What's New

We've set records for snowfall in the Inland Northwest this winter, and although this is great for plants and the aquifer, it may not be so good for an aching sciatica. Either way, I think we're all glad to see the arrival of spring.

This winter we've been recruiting new talent to our organization. NPHC's philosophy of providing education and training for its staff and high quality services for its clients, continues to attract talented industry professionals to the company. Our returning staff have also been updating their skills so we can provide you with cutting-edge arboriculture and landscaping practices.

With the added staff, we look forward to expanding our landscape construction services. We have many hardscape offerings, such as pavers, block retaining walls, stamped concrete, and natural stone patios and walls. We can also provide complete sprinkler system installs, as well as sprinkler repairs and upgrades for those who just need a little "tweaking" done.

Landscape design is done in-house when possible, but we also have a great network of independent designers and architects that can help put your dreams down on paper. We are confident that our landscape construction crew will make your dreams come alive in your backyard. Call us now to get your plans moving forward.

We are excited about the new season and look forward to seeing you out in your yards and gardens shortly.

In care of trees,



President

## Spring 2008

### Mark Your Calendars!

#### Home and Garden Show

April 4-6 at the Spokane Convention Center.  
Info: (509) 279-7000  
Fri: Noon - 9pm  
Sat : 10am - 9pm  
Sun: 10am - 5pm  
\$8 adults

#### Arbor Day

at Finch Arboretum  
April 26, 10am-3pm.  
*Educational booths, demonstrations and planting.*  
Info: (509) 624-4832

#### Master Gardener's Open House

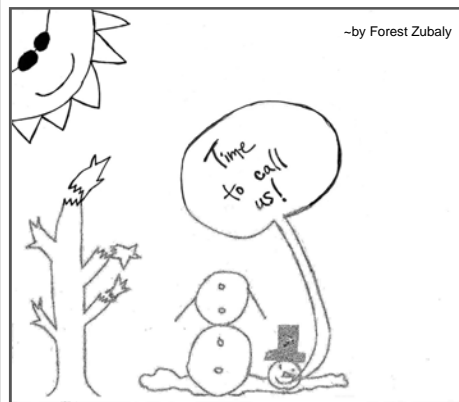
April 26, 10am-3pm.  
Spokane County Extension  
*Educational information and gardening related sales.*  
Info: (509) 477-2048

#### Garden Expo

May 10, 9am-5pm.  
Spokane Community College  
*A very large sale of all things related to gardening.*  
Info: 509-535-8434

### To Do Now

- Be sure to get your sprinklers turned on and adjusted as early as possible (April 1-15<sup>th</sup>). You don't have to use them if we get plenty of rain, but if not, your plants will thank you.
- Early spring is the time to get pre-emergent herbicide applications done on those shrub beds. If done properly, these applications can prevent new weed seeds from germinating for up to 8 months.
- Evaluate your plants for spring fertilizing needs. Most plants can benefit from proper fertilizing in the spring, especially acid loving species and those trees and shrubs that may have been injured with the heavy snowfall.



## We love "Bein' Green!"

Jim Henson's Kermit said it first, "It's Not Easy Bein' Green," but today the environment is at the forefront of our minds. Now "green" is the tag line for the entire landscape industry and has become a way of thinking that will help everything from global warming to local water, soil, and air pollution.

Our industry has always been termed a "green" industry. And in truth we are! Trees, plants, and turf grass help the environment by reducing heating and cooling costs year-round. Mature trees can cool a city by 10% with their shade alone! The trick is to find the right place for the right tree in your yard. In addition, did you know that the cooling effect of an averaged sized lawn is equal to about 12 tons of air conditioning? This is more than a home's central air-conditioning unit.

Trees and other green growing things provide a lot of our breathable air. When we drive, our cars produce CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) and plants absorb that and replace it with breathable O<sub>2</sub> (oxygen). One acre of mature trees can allow one car to drive 26,000 miles and one acre of well maintained turf can keep 70 people breathing for a year—not too shabby! In addition, the root systems of plants help filter out bad stuff like nitrogen oxides,

ammonia, and sulfur oxides before they get into our water system.



The bottom line is that we truly are a "green" industry and we intend to stay that way. Unfortunately environmental problems exist—but they are not beyond our control. Three properly placed trees can save you anywhere from \$100 to \$250 in annual energy costs. The savings are not just in money, but also in conservation of energy and resources that can be used elsewhere. Let's help keep the planet green by planting more trees and preserving those we already have.

~Thorin Brown

## Make Note!

### NPHC has a new email address!

You now can reach us at: [nphc@northwestplanthealthcare.com](mailto:nphc@northwestplanthealthcare.com)

Our website is still the same:  
[www.northwestplanthealthcare.com](http://www.northwestplanthealthcare.com)

If you are interested, we have \$2 off coupons for the Home and Garden Show, April 4-6 at the convention center. Please contact us and we'll mail them to you while supplies last.

"The crew did a nice job. They were all hard working, efficient, and appeared to be careful with themselves, their gear and machines, each other, and our plants and yard. [We] were pleased with the results. Thanks for your great company and service. I'm sure we'll be calling you again."

~M.S., Colbert

## Scuffins (a kind of muffin)<sup>©</sup>

Makes 24 muffins

- ½ cup softened butter (one stick)
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 10 drops of pure orange oil (or grated peel of one orange)
- 2 cups buttermilk
- 2 cups white flour
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 400°. Line standard muffin tins with foil muffin liners (or paper liners if you prefer). Put the stick of butter (in its wax paper) on a microwave-safe plate and soften in the microwave on VERY LOW for 30 seconds

(time may vary depending on individual microwaves). Gently remove butter from its paper into a large mixing bowl. Add sugar and mix until creamy. Add egg and mix well. Add orange oil (or peel), vanilla, and 1 cup of the buttermilk and mix well. Next add both flours, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Pour in the remaining buttermilk and gently mix it all together. Fold in the chocolate chips. Batter should be light and airy—do not over mix.

Spoon into muffin tins and fill to the top—there is exactly enough batter to fill 24 muffin tins. Bake at 400° for 20 minutes or until tops of muffins are golden brown and toothpick comes out clean.

*Thank you to Simone who contributed this recipe—she loves to be creative with baking, and says, "I wanted something that was as light as a scone, but richer like a muffin."*

## "Ask the Tree Care Experts"

**Q. Do you know about the phosphorus issue and possible bans?**

**A.** Phosphorus is a necessary nutrient for all plants. However, in lakes and ponds it can stimulate the growth of weeds and algae, which may have an adverse effect on those ecosystems. For this reason, several states are regulating the use of phosphorus in all detergents and fertilizers.

In Washington State, there are currently no state-wide regulations regarding the use of fertilizers containing phosphorus. In Spokane County, Liberty Lake has passed a resolution requesting that all residents discontinue using dishwasher detergents containing more than .5% phosphorus. They also have established a 'no use policy' for lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus in an effort to protect Liberty Lake and its watershed. In other words, they are discouraging the application of fertilizers containing phosphorus to all but newly established lawns. This policy does not extend to tree and shrub fertilizers, which is what we use at Northwest Plant Health Care.

Please be assured that we are and always will be in compliance with regulations, and will offer our customers the most environmentally friendly solutions.

**Q. With all the snow this winter, how will I deal with flooding in my landscape?**

**A.** During years of heavy snowfall, flooding is always a concern in a landscape. If you consistently have to deal with this problem, you might want to consider installing underground drains that will help move the water down through the soil matrix. Also, pay attention to where your water is gathering, you may be able to diminish it by strategically pushing the snow to another area, or by creating a dike (piling sandbags for example) to enable the water to drain or run off in another area.

~Becky Phillips



Snow Damaged Tree



Photos courtesy of Simone Ramel

Who's Hot!



**Brad Brougher...**is our new Production Manager for the General Tree Work and Landscape Crews. He will assure high-quality results for our clients in a safe and timely manner. Brad has been in the landscaping industry for 26 years and has done every phase of it. He is known for his attention to detail and being a customer advocate. Focusing on the customer is what inspires and motivates him. In his new position, Brad's primary goal is to build a high-quality and well-respected landscape division. He's excited about working with NPHC because the company is organized and the expectations are clear. During his spare time, Brad likes to go fishing and can be found surfing the internet for landscaping sites. He has two sons, one lives locally and the other is in Rochester, NY.

What's Not!

### Storm Damaged Trees...

Storms are an act of nature and everything is at the mercy of the elements. However, the storm is only one side in the interactive complex; the other is the plants themselves. Problems can greatly predispose a tree to failure, whether inherent to a plant species or created by previous injury. Some species are more susceptible to damage than others. Some structural defects that are common to certain species are co-dominant leaders, tight branch unions, and "included bark." Other problems may result from past injuries, many of which are caused by human interactions. Improper pruning, such as "topping," can lead to a weakened tree and greatly reduces a tree's ability to withstand storms. Fortunately many of these problems can be curbed if caught early enough. Like most problems, preventative measures are the best way to ensure a tree's longevity and health.

Once a tree experiences damage in some form or another, it is the job of an arborist to assess the risk and make an informed decision about its future. Trees are extremely resilient and often have the ability to bounce back from even the most dire situations. Having a Certified Arborist evaluate a tree is especially important when the tree might be deemed hazardous, such as when a target is involved and the tree could cause damage.

After the risk assessment is complete and it is decided the tree is worth saving, various methods of restorative pruning can be implemented. Much can be done to alleviate problems found, such as removing damaged limbs to prevent infection and encourage proper wound formation, and restructuring a canopy for future crown development. At Northwest Plant Health Care, Inc., we love trees and get excited about doing the things necessary to give a storm damaged tree another chance.

~Ben Larson

Northwest Plant Health Care, Inc.



P.O. Box 1978  
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208-687-2884

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***Organic Insect and Disease Control***

Did you know that NPHC offers organic options for insect and disease control? In fact, we regularly employ the use of these products to control many pests and diseases without a specific request from our customers. We do this because our number one goal is to develop and maintain healthy, as well as beautiful, plants and landscapes. This means we choose products that will gain and sustain control of a pest with the least impact on the environment.

When selecting pesticides, our Certified Arborists choose products based on the individual circumstances that require treatment. These include: the nature of the pest and the severity of the infestation or infection; the species and individual health status of a given plant; the surrounding environmental factors such as the presence of beneficial insects, exposed ground water or vegetable gardens; and

specific requests made by our clients. By synthesizing this information together, we can make informed and conscientious decisions about the best products and overall treatment strategies to use.

However, some pest problems are so severe and potentially damaging that they require aggressive and integrated treatments to gain control. Once the initial threat to the plant is reduced, we actively look to utilize products and methods that have the least impact on the environment, and yet maintain the health and aesthetic quality of plants in your landscape.

It is important to note that when choosing pesticides, the organic option does not necessarily mean the least impact. Some organic (naturally occurring) products fall under the category of "broad-spectrum control." In other words, they affect both the good and

bad organisms they contact. In many cases, we will choose to use a synthetic (artificially developed) product that affects a very narrow range of organisms. This means the pesticide targets the pest causing the damage, and preserves the organisms that may be benign or even beneficial in the landscape.

Whether you prefer that only organic products are used on your property, or allow our Certified Arborists to make those decisions, you can trust that we have you, your plants, and the environment in mind.

~Ben Kappen

