

# Let's Talk Trees

Ethics Loyalty Integrity Quality of Life



## From Joe...our vision & values

As many of you know, over the last 14 years NPHC has had the good fortune to grow from a small owner-operated company into a thriving business enjoying strong market share in the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene tree care and landscape industry. Given the current economic conditions, Kate and I see this stage of growth as the perfect opportunity to refocus on our key values to ensure we are maintaining the quality that has nurtured the loyalty of our clients and referral sources. The following is what we put into writing several years ago to guide our business decision making and we share it with you now as a promise of our continued commitment.

### Visions and Culture

- NPHC exists to create beautiful, healthy plants and landscapes in the Inland NW
- NPHC considers what is best for the client, the plant and the company to guide our work
- NPHC fosters long term relationships with clients and employees (& their families)

### Values

- NPHC is ethical, honest and trustworthy, utilizing our expertise to do what we say we'll do
- NPHC is loyal, going the extra mile to maintain positive mutually-beneficial relationships

It is of paramount importance that NPHC staff embodies our dedication to quality plant care and exceptional service. We know you, our core clients and referral sources, are the keys to our past, present and future success. Thank you for your confidence. Please continue to give us your input; we greatly appreciate it. Happy 2010 and we'll see you at the home shows! ~

In care of trees,

*Joe Zabely*

### Discover NPHC online!



Between newsletters be sure and visit our website to find Monthly Discounts and newsletter archives chock full of articles, tips, recipes, and more. PLUS, sign up to have our specials sent by email!

➤ No internet? No problem. Just give Anna a call. She'll tell you about the monthly deals.

## THE COOL CROWD

### Rockwood Retirement South

Rockwood Retirement Community off 25th on the South Hill has been a great client for many years. The grounds there are impeccable with highly manicured lawns, perennial shrubs, overstory Ponderosa Pines and annuals for color throughout the season. Doris Keatts is the Manager of Grounds and takes great pride in managing the trees, shrubs and flowers in and around the homes. She leaves the large tree removals, pruning and pesticide applications to the qualified NPHC staff. We appreciate the opportunity to care for the trees at such a wonderful property. ~

Seasonal Savings  
for our valued customers!

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**Pruning, Removals and  
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Valid for all jobs performed  
before March 1, 2010

## FREE

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NPHC before April 1, 2010

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and we'll match the price of  
your current provider.**

Refer your neighbor and both of you  
receive 5% off. Sign up 2 neighbors  
and receive 10% off, etc.

Sign up the whole block and we'll  
send you to Hawaii! Just kidding.

**Open Flap For  
Seasonal To Dos**



# Congrats!

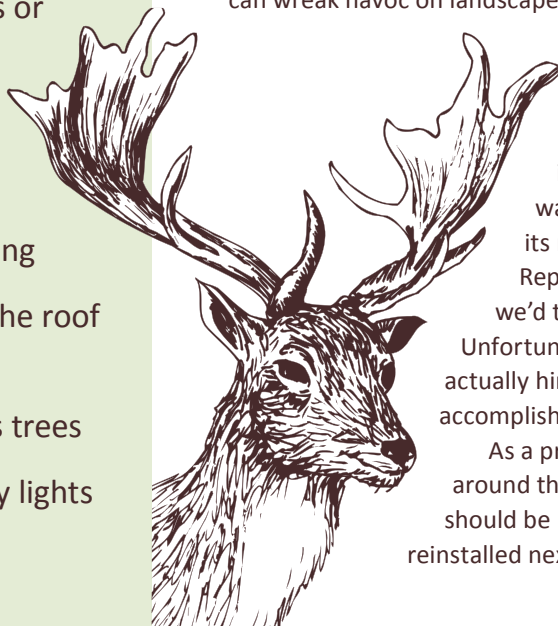
Stephanie Carroll  
winner of our \$600 Fall  
gift certificate giveaway



## SEASONAL To Do List

### Winter maintenance tips for a healthy and vigorous spring

- ☐ Aggressive or rejuvenation pruning of overgrown shrubs
- ☐ Remove or prune trees that require access onto turf for heavier equipment while the ground is frozen
- ☐ Water evergreens that are tucked under eaves or overhangs
- ☐ Fill bird feeders
- ☐ Prune fruit trees
- ☐ Go snowshoeing or skiing
- ☐ Check for ice dams on the roof above your plants
- ☐ Recycle your Christmas trees
- ☐ Take down your holiday lights



## Pruning fruit trees

by ben larsen

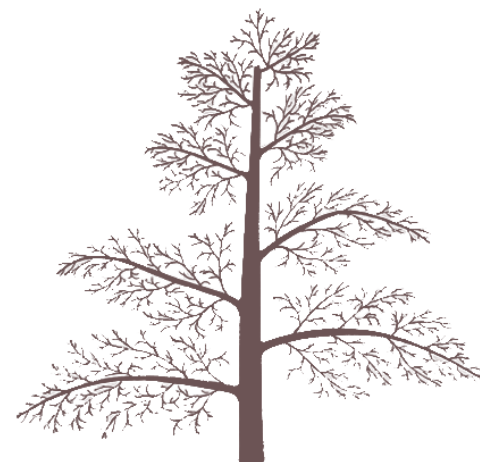
Historically, Spokane was surrounded by apple orchards stretching for miles. Excluding peach and apricot, it should be no surprise that many types of fruit trees thrive in this area—summers provide long days for fruit maturation; early frosts help sweeten the fruit; and cold winters make it difficult for some pests to survive.

When thinking about pruning fruit trees, you must determine the purpose of a given tree in the landscape. If the main objective is to have a tree that's aesthetically pleasing, the arborist working on the tree will focus on ornamental pruning (shaping the tree) rather than training the tree for fruit production. If production of fruit is the primary objective, more time will be spent on developing a strong, solid structure that will support the weight of the fruit.

The first step in pruning any type of fruit tree is removing diseased, dying, or dead wood. Removal of infected wood (whether it's fungal, bacterial or pest related) will ensure that the problems do not spread throughout the tree. When dealing with diseased wood, it is necessary to sterilize pruning tools with rubbing alcohol or bleach to reduce the likelihood of transmitting the infection from one cut to another, or from one tree to another.

If you'd like to train a tree for fruit production, you must allow the growth of a single, upright trunk and be sure the tree has well-spaced side branches. A tree with a central leader is less susceptible to broken limbs than a tree with an open center, and it still allows light penetration for the formation of flowers. Properly trained trees will yield higher quality fruit much sooner and will live longer than those that are not trained and perhaps even neglected.

Another aspect of fruit tree pruning is to thin overly abundant fruiting spurs (short twigs that bear the fruit). Removing these extra spurs allows more light and air to reach the branches. It is also necessary to thin excessive fruit (fruit crowding each other)—this allows the remaining fruit to grow larger, and will reduce the overall weight of the branches therefore alleviating the risk of large breaks. Limb breakage significantly inhibits the productivity of the tree and may greatly reduce its life span. It is imperative that you start training fruit trees at a young age, and whatever style of pruning is desired, as a general rule, pruning of fruit trees is most often done during the dormant season. ❧



*The ideal tree shape has the central leader well developed, the scaffold branches well spaced and fruitful to the trunk, and the upper whorl of branches is smaller than the lower whorl to minimize shading.*

## Ask the tree care experts

### A big buck just rubbed my Linden tree, what can we do to save it?

While living in the great Inland Northwest is a pleasure because of its wildlife, animals can wreak havoc on landscapes. Even plants that are "deer resistant" most of the year can become a great scratching spot or fine entrée for deer during the winter.

Once you've had damage, we typically have to wait and see how well your particular tree will fair on its own. If the cambium layer has been disturbed all the way around, the tree's chances are certainly limited since its nutrition highway has been completely interrupted. Replacement may be an option. However, for a valuable plant, we'd typically give it a season to see whether it will recover.

Unfortunately, any type of "mixture" you would paint on would actually hinder the closure of the wound since trees are designed to accomplish compartmentalization themselves.

As a preventative measure, you certainly can apply plastic sleeves around the trunk; these are readily available at nurseries. These should be removed when the deer pressure decreases and can be reinstalled next season as long as it still fits the stem of the tree. ❧

### Should I put mulch rings around my trees?

Absolutely! We love to see trees with mulch rings, especially on the newly planted trees. That's not to say it isn't good for larger specimens as well, it certainly is and here's why: Mulch (ie: composted bark fines or shredded woody material, not rocks) is an excellent source of organic matter. This breaks down over a period of time and provides nutrients to the soil much the same way leaf and needle litter breaks down on the forest floor. The mulch holds moisture as opposed to turf grass that is in direct competition with the tree for available water resources. Finally, the ring itself keeps the mowers and weed zips away from the base of the tree, decreasing the chance of injuring the young stems while cutting the turf grass. Always use composted material, don't place more than 3+ inches, and don't put the material in contact with the stem of the tree. ❧

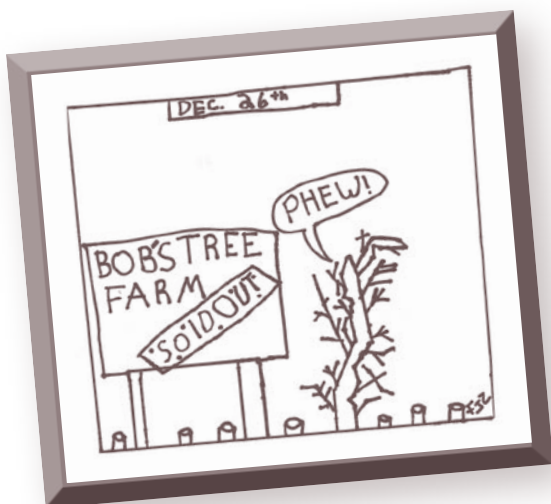
## Who's hot! {and single!}

Albert Ferguson



Albert is our valuable shop mechanic. As the rarely seen backbone of NPHC, he has a huge sense of pride in keeping all our equipment serviced and running well for the crew. And he should; without his hard work and dedication we wouldn't get very far. Albert is a multi-talented and vital asset to NPHC who loves the work environment and the ethics and values NPHC is based upon. He has been with us since June of 2007 and is currently attending SCC for Heavy Diesel Mechanics.

When Albert is not being called to the shop to fix something he is busy being a single father to his beautiful daughter Shadra, 12. He is also involved in his church and enjoys hiking, fishing and hunting. Albert grew up in the Post Falls area and loves the beauty the Northwest has to offer. ☺



*We aren't the only ones happy  
the holidays are over!*

## What's not!

### Poor customer service

Believe it or not, even in today's economy we are hearing about this repeatedly on the phone. Waiting to be called back or not being serviced at all by contractors not interested in providing good customer service is a real problem.

Because of our relatively small size, we can perform smaller landscape construction jobs than many other companies. We have stayed steady but aren't overly busy because we cater to our existing clients and referrals. Working in established landscapes for ten years, we are comfortable with revisions.

We always provide personalized service and a hand crafted beautiful landscape. Get your projects on the schedule now for the coming spring season. ☺

*Ben says this dish, with its medium spicy flair, is ideal with a crusty bread and leafy green salad. Enjoy!*

### "Salt of the Earth" Chicken Stroganoff

2 Tbs. olive oil, divided	1 c. dry white wine or Vermoth
2 medium onions, thinly sliced	1 c. chicken broth
1 green pepper, thinly sliced	2 Tbs. barbeque sauce
1 ½ tsp. kosher salt, divided	1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
½ tsp. black pepper, divided	2 Tbs. dijon mustard
16 oz. mushrooms, thinly sliced	½ tsp. hot sauce
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into ½ in. strips	½ c. sour cream (or IMO substitute)
	1 lb. wide egg noodles

Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring frequently, until soft, about 8 minutes. Add the green pepper, ½ tsp. of the salt, ¼ tsp. of the pepper, and the mushrooms. Continue cooking until the mushrooms give up their liquid and are tender, about 6 minutes. Place the vegetables in a colander, reserving both vegetables and liquid. Return pan to heat and add the remaining 1Tbs. of oil. Season the chicken with the remaining 1 tsp. of salt and ¼ tsp of pepper. Cook the chicken until golden brown and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Add it to the vegetables. Pour the wine, broth and vegetable liquid into the pan and bring to a boil. Add the bbq sauce, Worcestershire, mustard, and hot sauce. Whisk until smooth. Boil until the liquid has reduced by half, to about 1 ¼ cups, and thickened some. Reduce heat and whisk in the sour cream. Do not let the sauce boil. Return the vegetables and chicken to pan and simmer until heated through. Serve over cooked egg noodles. Serves 6.

➤ Find more recipes in our newsletter archives online

*"Thank you for your excellent service. Your employees that worked here did a great job. I will certainly let others know about your company."*

*~ S.T., Spokane, WA*

Call now to begin planning  
your spring landscape  
project. Design &  
consultation  
is free!





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## THE INSIDE DIRT

Pruning fruit trees

Cool winter tips  
and savings

Meet Rockwood  
Retirement South

## How NPHC compares to other spray services?

When talking with folks about our services, we are often asked how we differ from other companies when it comes to caring for trees and shrubs. The chart below outlines the major differences between the Plant Health Care (PHC) management system employed by NPHC and the approach used by most other companies in town. We know of no other company that offers PHC as a comprehensive holistic approach to caring for your landscape. Please call one of our knowledgeable arborists to learn further how we can care for your plants.

	PHC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	OTHER SPRAY COMPANIES
FOCUS	Focus is on the plants: purpose is to increase their health and vigor while also controlling pest populations that decrease vigor.	Focus is on eradicating the pests which attack the plants.
ACTION	Proactive improvement of the plants' cultural environment and deficiencies so they are more resistant to pests or diseases.	Reactively deal with a pest or disease. This often is a secondary issue because pests are attracted to a plant in a weakened state.
TARGET	Primarily use narrow spectrum or bio-rational products which preserve natural insect predators that help to suppress pest populations.	Almost exclusively utilize a broad-spectrum pesticide, or combinations of such products, to control outbreak populations.
PROCEDURE	Monitoring visits are timed for anticipated pest problems. Specific plants needing attention are targeted with a customized product for their issue, avoiding overuse of unneeded pesticides.	Use "cover sprays" to spray a large variety of plants in order to control a large variety of different pests with a standard mixture of products used for most properties.
RESULTS	Clients observe their healthy, vigorous, aesthetically pleasing plants. Relevant information empowers clients.	Clients pay year after year for multiple chemical applications against the same pests. Information typically is limited to line items on invoices.