

# Minnesota Nurserymen's newsletter



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## CARING FOR HERITAGE TREES\*

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Today, more than ever, town planners and architects place emphasis on the value of trees in an urban landscape. With this has come, I believe, a growing awareness on the part of the general public of the contribution made by trees to general amenity.

This in turn has led to the need for increased consideration by park officers of proper management of the trees under their care. There also arises the need for these officers to provide sound technical advice to the architect, the engineer, and others who frequently encounter tree problems with which their professional training does not equip them to deal.

I think that parks officers today are very conscious of their responsibility to preserve the value of the trees inherited from previous generations. When the time comes, they will be able to hand on this heritage not only unimpaired but even improved for the benefit of future generations.

This, of course, cannot be done by adopting a standstill policy and letting trees look after themselves. It implies a continuous process of removal of unsound trees and overcrowded trees to permit proper development of the remainder which must then be properly maintained. Above all, a consistent replanting policy is needed. I stress this as the only way of ensuring perpetuation of species and avoiding great gaps in the age groups of the tree population.

Several instances have occurred in recent years where public criticism has been aroused when large scale removal, necessary for safety, of a favorite tree has been carried out and the whole character of a park drastically changed. This state of affairs is likely to arise where the majority of trees are the same age and consequently reach the limit of useful life at about the same time. Destructive effects can be greatly minimized where consistent replanting has ensured a variety of age groups.

\* Adapted from an article in Arborist News.

## Publicity

In this respect, I have found by experience that an informed public is often an understanding public. If good advance publicity of the intention and reasons for removal of particularly important trees is given, a great deal of embarrassing criticism can be avoided. After all, a parks officer is a servant of the public and has a duty to make his intentions known where the public's enjoyment may be affected. It should also be remembered that by reason of his position and training he is in possession of knowledge not generally available to others.

## Public Safety

The amenity of trees cannot, of course, be preserved at the expense of public safety and I consider that a parks officer has a duty of paramount importance in this respect. He is in an extremely vulnerable position should injury be caused by a tree under his care.

I think it essential that a regular system of inspection be enforced and suggest that this be carried out by the man in charge of each park or property twice each year--once in leaf and once out of leaf. This man can then report any signs of weakness to the responsible officer who can arrange a complete examination of suspect trees and initiate appropriate action. I stress the importance of ladder inspection where doubt exists because, in large old trees particularly, weaknesses exist aloft that cannot be seen from the ground.

## Pruning

Where it is considered that undue hazard can be removed by reduction of the weight and density of the crown, this is usually best done by skilled pruning rather than by topping and lopping.

Topping and lopping, unfortunately, are in the eyes of many the only ways to treat a fine tree that has outgrown its situation. Initially, it is a cheaper operation to perform than skilled pruning and does not involve the use of highly skilled labor.

However, many serious disadvantages arise from this practice, and when it is realized that sound pruning principles can be applied to large trees much future trouble can be avoided.

A topped tree is, to me, a ruined tree, for all the natural shape of crown and branch tracery is irretrievably lost and the immediate effect is unsightly if not hideous. The usually subsequent bushy growth eventually hides the scars to some extent, but full natural grace and beauty can never be recovered. More serious, if not so obvious, is the fact that new growth arising from a hard lopped crown is seldom securely anchored and, therefore, the process has to be repeated after a few years if safety is to be maintained. Also, it is virtually impossible to prevent the entry of decay-causing organisms through the large wounds inseparable from this operation, so that it really amounts to the beginning of the end so far as the tree is concerned.

Skilled pruning of large trees, on the other hand, has the merit of achieving the desired reduction of weight and wind resistance while avoiding the drawbacks mentioned. A great deal of weight can be removed from weakened limbs by this method, yet the general outline of the crown is preserved. The actual number of cuts is naturally increased, but the majority are of a minor nature that quickly heal, diminishing the chances of serious decay. Furthermore, the resurgence of new growth is less vigorous and less concentrated so that it is not necessary to repeat the process for many years. This is an especially important factor where obstruction of light to buildings is concerned.

When any form of tree work is in progress, the men employed should be supplied with the necessary means of warning the public. If necessary, access to the vicinity of operations should be denied to the public.

#### PRESIDENT SPEAKS

The board of directors of the Minnesota Nurserymen's Association is presently considering a public relations program that has been outlined, at our invitation, by a successful public relations firm. The preliminary outline, based partly on the study of the Horticultural Research Institute (an AAN affiliate), was received with interest and enthusiasm by the board. The board plans to pursue the idea after the press of spring activity is over. You will be hearing more about this, I feel sure, as it appears to have real significance for Minnesota nurserymen.

The suggestion of having a summer tour of nurseries for landscape architects in the area has been brought to the attention of the board. Though the suggestion met with approval, it seems to be a more likely project for the Twin City Association than for the State Association.

It was felt that even if such a tour were within our province, we would have to postpone it for at least a year because of the large summer meeting we are having.

#### NOTES TO THE NURSERYMEN

Walter P. Trampe

#### MITES

Kelthane has been used, with considerable success, to control many species of mites. It has many attributes that make it popular with nurserymen and fruit growers. During the past 2 years, several nurserymen who have used Kelthane on two-spotted mites for 5 or 6 years have failed to get control. Nurserymen should watch their application methods carefully and try changing to another miticide for a year. Tedion (Tetradifon), Mitox (Chlorbenside), Oovtran (Ovex), Cygon (Dimethoate), and Chlorobenzilate have been used with varying degrees of success.

I will be glad to share my observations on the effectiveness of these materials under various conditions encountered in Minnesota if you have a problem in choosing a miticide.

#### AVAILABLE BULLETINS

Nurserymen are urged to write to the Agricultural Extension Service, St. Paul Campus, University of Minnesota, or visit their county agent to obtain bulletins available to them. Listed below are selected publications that should be valuable in planning this year's spraying program.

1. Insecticides--Extension Bulletin 263-- Contains practical information on insecticides and their use. Also contains a dilution table, sprayer calibration information, and helpful spraying guides for controlling plant pests.

2. Fungicides, Bactericides, and Nematocides--Extension Bulletin 312, Herbert G. Johnson and Earl K. Wade-- Lists common fungicides, bactericides, and nematocides and gives pertinent information concerning their use. This bulletin is not a field manual, but a summary of information that should be helpful to specialized groups such as nurserymen.

3. The Commercial Orchard Spray Guide-- Of interest and value to nurserymen for reference information.

4. Controlling Insect Pests of Trees and Shrubs--Entomology Fact Sheet 28, T. M. Peters.

5. Recognition and Control of Scale Insects on Trees and Shrubs--Extension Folder 207, A. C. Hodson and J. A. Lofgren.

6. Repellents--U. S. Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service, Mimeo 512-- A source list for various repellents now on the market.

### ARBORETUM NOTES

Winter has passed and determination of winter injury to plants has begun. As usual, there is no set pattern of winter injury. Some plants considered hardy show considerable injury. Some plants thought to be tender show no injury.

Bloom has been sporadic. Forsythias generally showed little or no bloom. Forsythia ovata and Forsythia viridissima Koreana were the exceptions, producing what might be considered full bloom. Flowering plum, apricots, and Prairie Almond showed little bloom. Chokecherries, Mayday tree, and Stockton pincherry had a full bloom. Generally, flower buds on Magnolias were killed, but M. stellata had slight bloom. Azaleas continued to surprise us with good bloom on most species and varieties proven hardy in previous years. Crabapple bloom was generally light, probably reflecting the effect of last summer's drought.

Winter injury was especially severe on evergreens with yews, junipers, and pines showing the most injury. Many differences showed up between types of yews, indicating several selections that have promise for this area. Among junipers, many types of Pfitzers showed considerable burn. Maney, Skandia, and Arcadia continue to look good.

Spireas, in general, showed considerable dieback. Nipponica rotundifolia, douglasi, and japonicum coccineum were killed nearly to the ground. Prinsepia uniflora, normally hardy, showed considerable dieback. Aralia spinosa was killed to the ground, but Aralia elata showed no injury. Japanese quince, which normally shows only flower bud injury, was killed to snow-line. The privets were badly injured, necessitating removal of much deadwood.

Plants showing serious injury can be removed from the collection. Complete notes on winter injury are being taken and information on any species or variety is available on request. This information should be helpful in making future recommendations.

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