

The D.J. Snyder Company

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TREES NEED OUR HELP!

Summer is a time when we naturally turn to the outdoors to enjoy nature. It's also a time when, as homeowners, we become more involved with outdoor projects like gardening and landscaping. While hunched over the annuals or pushing the mower, it is easy to overlook the trees in the yard. The most common misconception is that trees take care of themselves. The truth is that most trees in yards across America are growing in somewhat unnatural environments, and could use our help to survive and flourish. D. J. Snyder and The D. J. Snyder Company identify the following key practices for optimal tree health.

Fertilization: Just because you fertilized your yard does not mean you fertilized your trees. When trees require extra nutrition, they should be fertilized in specific ways to assure they receive the maximum benefit from the treatment. Over-fertilization can create tree health problems, so the need for fertilization should be determined by measuring annual growth, checking visual symptoms and chemically analyzing the soil or tree leaves. Timing of fertilization is important in some cases to avoid a late flush of growth.

Watering: Once established, trees generally don't need regular watering. However, they may need extra water in long dry spells. Be careful - too much water can be just as harmful as too little!

Pruning: Trees are pruned for various reasons, but in most cases, proper pruning is a tree health treatment. Removing dead or dying branches discourages the spread of decay or insect infestations and removes safety hazards while improving the tree's appearance. Proper pruning can also help prevent storm damage. By contrast, topping and lion's tailing, while sometimes touted as ways to "make trees safe," instead cause severe and permanent damage to the tree.

Mulching: A two to four-inch mulch layer over the tree's root system has many benefits. It protects the base of the tree from mower damage and reduces competition with turf or weeds. Mulch tends to stabilize soil temperatures and increase the soil's water-holding capacity, which translates into less watering. Finally, mulch can increase soil microbial activity and loosen the soil, which can reduce the need for aeration and fertilization. In short, mulch emulates the tree's natural habitat. Mulch can be applied any time of the year. Get rid of weeds and turf before you apply the mulch, and make sure the mulch doesn't touch the trunk of the tree, otherwise it creates a favorable environment for harmful insects and disease. Avoid over-mulching because excessive mulch can smother the tree's root system.

Check your tree: You may be able to carry out most tree maintenance yourself, especially for small trees, but it is best to have a professional arborist evaluate their needs first. Remember, a tree is a living thing and its health and stability changes over time.

For a list of professional arborists in your area, contact the D.J. Snyder Company, 1-617--964-TREE (8733), or perform your own zip code search on the D. J. Snyder Company web site: www.djsnyder.com. The D. J. Snyder is a 15-year-old public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture.