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Protect Your Evergreens In Winter With Antidesiccants



Winter can be harsh on trees and shrubs in our area. When the weather is very cold and the ground freezes, plants are unable to absorb water from the surrounding soil. So, instead, they use up the water stored in their leaves and stems. This can be very damaging for evergreens, which retain their leaves in winter.

Applying an antidesiccant spray to certain evergreens' foliage is a good way of avoiding winter damage to evergreens. The antidesiccant adds an additional oily or waxy coating to the leaves, keeping the moisture inside. Many evergreens in our area are especially vulnerable to winter damage — particularly holly, rhododendron, cherry laurel, skip laurel, mountain laurel, Japanese skimmia, leucothoe, aucuba and boxwood. We recommend using an antidesiccant on these plants in early winter, and another application in late-January to mid-February if the weather breaks.

Another thing to do throughout the fall and winter season is to water evergreens whenever the weather is conducive to do so. Even a once a week drenching will go a long way. Many of the stressed and dieback conditions we experienced this season are due to the abnormally dry weather last year and earlier this year. Be mindful of newly planted materials as it typically takes three growing seasons to become established. Antidesiccants are biodegradable and will wear off the leaves come spring.

Places to Visit in the Tri-State Region

New York: Muscoot Farm

Muscoot Farm has been around since the 1800s, but was acquired by the Westchester County Department of Parks in 1964 and turned into an interpretative farm, park, and museum with a strong focus on agricultural and education. It features year round displays of various farm animals, hiking trails, farm implements and buildings, as well as maple syrup and sugar harvesting in late winter. Activities this Fall include: autumn celebrations, pumpkin picking, a kids farm run, basket shows, farmers markets, live theater, blacksmithing workshop and more. www.muscootfarm.org



New Jersey: Demarest Farms

Proclaimed by the owners to be "The jewel of Bergen County," Demarest Farms is a year-round working farm, fruit and vegetable market, as well as a popular pick-your-own apple and pumpkin location in the Fall. The farm has been around since 1886 and occupies 34 acres in Hillsdale and Saddle River. Although apple picking is over for the season, visitors can still pick pumpkins and take part in other activities at the farm: hay rides, children's playground, petting zoo... or visit the deli for home made donuts, and shop at the fresh produce store. www.demarestfarms.com

Connecticut: Audubon Society Birdcraft Museum and Sanctuary

Founded in 1914 and located in Fairfield County, Birdcraft was the first private bird sanctuary in the United States. This 6-acre site was originally planted as a refuge to attract, harbor, and feed migratory and resident birds. More than 120 bird species have been recorded on its grounds (which includes the Birdcraft Sanctuary as well as the Museum and Caretakers Cottage). The museum is currently closed for renovations but the rest of the sanctuary is open and consists of ponds and gardens to attract birds and butterflies. www.ctaudubon.org



Arbor Notes



FALL/WINTER 2016

Almstead Around Town



Town Of Pelham — 9/11 Memorial Flag

Arborist **Dan Dalton** and the Almstead crew donated their time and expertise to put up a large American Flag at the 9/11 Memorial in the Town of Pelham. The town held two Memorial Ceremonies on September 11th remembering the 10 people from the Town of Pelham who lost their lives in the terror attacks.

Teaneck Creek Conservancy Talk

New Jersey Branch Manager and arborist, **Ryan Duff**, held a well attended, talk and demonstration on tree



planting at Teaneck Creek Conservancy on September 1st. The Teaneck Creek Conservancy is a member-supported, non-profit organization dedicated to the reclamation and protection of the environmental, cultural, and historical legacy of the Teaneck Creek watershed.

Wave Hill Gardner's Party

Once again, Almstead sponsored the Gardner's Party at Wave Hill public garden and cultural center in the Bronx. This year's fund-raising event highlighted "Artistry in the Garden" and focused on the talents and contributions of garden artists who have had a significant impact on the field of horticulture.

This is Almstead's fourth year of sponsoring the event. We are thrilled to have the opportunity of giving back to this magnificent public garden and organization. The Almstead family, including **Ken Almstead (CEO)**, **Michael Almstead (VP)**, **Richard Almstead (Founder)**, **Dan Dalton (arborist)**, and their spouses attended the event. We also donated our services in the Silent Auction and presented each attendee with a kit for tagging their plants.



Peggy and Ken Almstead with Wave Hill board member, Vincent Inconiglios at the Gardner's Party (Photo by David Rodgers).

Westchester Home Show

Almstead will be at booth #38 of the Fall Westchester Home Show at the Westchester County Center on November 5th and 6th. Arborists from our Hawthorne and New Rochelle branch offices will be there to answer technical questions, make recommendations, and hand out Almstead goodies to attendees. *Contact your Almstead arborist or "friend" us on Facebook, to receive complimentary passes to this event.*



Fall Is The Best Time To Prepare Your Lawn For Next Year

Fall is the right time to think about your lawn and to ensure that it will be healthy and beautiful next year. After this year's hot and dry summer, it is probably suffering. Fortunately, a little care to it now will not only enhance how it looks for the rest of the fall but will prepare it for the approaching cold season and the year ahead.

Key lawn services that you should take advantage of during this time of year include core aeration, over-seeding, and fertilization.

Core Aeration:

It involves creating small holes in the soil to allow air, water and nutrients to penetrate the roots of the grass. When soil is compacted, the movement of oxygen, nutrients, and water to the turfs roots is restricted and results in a slow-growing, thin lawn. Since the flow of nutrients is also decreased, turf grown in compacted soils can quickly become vulnerable to drought,

disease, and insect damage.

Core aeration in the fall addresses the results of compaction of the soil from prolonged hot and dry weather conditions in addition to traffic. It will allow your turf to extend its root system — which will make your lawn grow faster, your turf greener, and strengthen it before the winter season.

Over-Seeding:

After core aerating your lawn, it is beneficial to over-seed it with desirable blends of turfgrass. Over-seeding is done by adding grass seeds directly into existing turf. It is an easy way to fill in bare spots, improve the color and density of the turf and make it less susceptible to diseases by adding a variety of hardy grass types based upon the site conditions. We use a superior mix enriched with endophytes that naturally repel various pests, as well as custom-blends to resolve issues typically related to sun

exposure on your specific site. *Talk to your Almstead lawn care professional about the best seeding options for your landscape.*

Fertilization:

In fall, the active growth of plants and trees slows down and nutrients taken in from the soil are instead used for health-promoting functions such as root development and disease resistance. It is therefore important for soil to be nutrient-rich and healthy at this time.

After a visual inspection, your Almstead arborist may conduct a soil test. Based on the results, we prepare a custom blend of fertilizer that addresses the deficiencies of macro-nutrients in the soil. Fall fertilization is important because proper nutrients in the soil will help your plants and lawn survive the harsh winter conditions and make them thrive in the next growing season.



A Letter from the CEO



The summer has been wonderful for outdoor activities as well as for getting out and socializing with family and friends. However, it has been challenging for trees and shrubs. The NOAA recently announced that the U.S. just had one of its five hottest summers since records began in the late 19th century. Conditions in our area have reflected this fact with drought conditions and water restrictions in place in some parts of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Now that we have moved past the hot and dry summer, its time to take care of our trees, shrubs and lawn with proactive methods so they are healthy and beautiful in the coming year and beyond.

This issue of Arbor Notes looks at some of the best practices for fall and winter, including: how to prepare your lawn in fall for next year; the advantages of winter pruning; and the benefits of antidesiccants on your evergreens. We also have recent updates on Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Longhorned Beetle and restrictions about moving host material in our region. We are very proud to have been awarded the renewal of our TCIA accreditation — which acknowledges our professionalism, expertise and ongoing commitment to our customers, employees and the industry.

Two of the most valuable services we offer our customers are our ongoing plant health care (PHC) program and our complimentary tree and shrub inspections in the Fall. You should have received our seasonal inspection mailer in the last week or two. If we don't hear back from you, our staff may reach out to you to schedule your appointment. We believe this free service is critical to the health and beauty of your landscape and is our opportunity to review the needs of your property with you — as well as to update and critique our care.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish your family a joyous Thanksgiving and a safe holiday season.

Thank you for your continued support. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you.

Sincerely,

Ken Almstead, CEO

International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist NY0335
Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) • Organic Lawn Care Professional

Advantages Of Winter Pruning

When spring comes, we think of all the things we should do in the garden, such as pruning. But winter can be a better time to prune for several reasons.

Pruning in winter is like working with an x-ray.

In winter, deciduous trees have cast off their coverings, giving us a much better view of their structure. We get a clear picture of the entire tree, allowing us to identify weak, cracked and crossing branches as well as dead wood. Winter is also the ideal time to uncover and address the structural flaws that can eventually lead to branch or tree failures. This is not so obvious to an untrained eye, but it is second nature for our arborists and climbers to spot dead branches and structural flaws.

Winter storms can be dangerous pruners.

High winds and wet snow put tremendous strain on branches. Broken branches should be professionally pruned so that the cut can be in the right place to promote the natural healing process that trees employ. We recommend that you identify and remove dead or cracked branches

before winter does its own pruning, which can be dangerous for property, people, and the tree.

Pruning is easier when the ground is frozen.

A tree care professional can typically move equipment closer to the trees they are working on without harming lawns or herbaceous perennials and annuals. Plus, your family will experience less inconvenience because of reduced yard usage in the winter.

It makes spring more beautiful.

By selectively pruning in winter, we can improve the saturation of flowers and fruit they have in the growing season.

If you do your own pruning, make sure you understand proper pruning techniques and use the right tools for the job. When trees require pruning of high branches or a power saw is needed, it's time to call a professional, like Almstead, with the right tools, equipment and safety training to do the job.



Almstead Renews Its TCIA Accreditation



Almstead recently underwent an extensive review of practices and was awarded a renewal of its accreditation by the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA). The process is the most stringent and reputable in the tree care industry. It evaluates businesses for professional standards and practices in every department and at each level of the company.

As part of the renewal process, an independent auditor examined our company for relevant licenses, proper insurance, customer service practices, operating standards, employee training, as well as adherence to safety regulation, industry standards and best business practices. The 3-day audit involved all our branch offices and included on-the-field inspections of our arborists, technicians and equipment.

We are very proud to receive our renewal of accreditation from the TCIA. It demonstrates that we have undergone a professional audit of our operations and are compliant with the best industry practices in tree care — all for the benefit of our clients. For more information, please visit the TCIA website at tcia.org.

Our Annual Summer Picnic

Once again, the Almstead family hosted a wonderful summer picnic for employees from all our branch offices and their families. This year's event was held at D'Onofrio Park in New Rochelle, NY. Kids took part in a sack race and egg run, had their faces painted, played soccer and enjoyed a water slide and bouncy house. Adults formed teams for a friendly tug-of-war game, while the field crew showed their technical skills by taking part in a throw ball competition — which involved hooking a small ball (used to set a climbers line) into a suspended aerial lift bucket. Everyone enjoyed the delicious food under the pavilion followed by ice cream and cookies.

The event also included our annual service awards. This year, 18 employees were given awards for service ranging from 5 years to 35 years — including Miguel Perez (foreman/climber), Alejandro Flores (foreman/climber), Cesar G. Martinez (PHC technician), Jose G. Oliveros (groundsman), and Federico Martinez (PHC technician) all of whom received an inscribed gold watch for over 20 years of service. Antonio Solorio Bejines (foreman/climber) who celebrated 30 years with Almstead this year, was presented with an all-expense paid, 7-day Bermuda Cruise for two with his wife, Sandra. (see photo above).



Almstead Arborist Gary Norman

Gary Norman is the branch manager of our Stamford, Connecticut office. As a consulting arborist, he primarily serves the communities of Cos Cob, Greenwich, Old Greenwich and Riverside. Gary has over 20 years of experience in the green industry and is an expert on the tree and shrub species in our region. He has been with Almstead since 2002 and his passion for his work and love of trees is obvious to everyone who knows him.

Gary has a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry from Michigan State University, as well continuing education in horticulture, arboriculture and organic care practices. He is a Connecticut Licensed Arborist, an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist, and an Accredited Organic Land Care Professional. Gary has also completed the Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) program offered by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) as well as at the Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) program from the TCIA.

Gary likes sharing his knowledge and experience with the community. He participates in several Arbor Day activities in Connecticut every year, along with the Almstead Connecticut team. They include talks, demonstrations, information booths, tree plantings, and tree-climbing stations for kids at local events.

In his free time, Gary enjoys spending time with his wife Kristie and children Jack and Emma, and taking part in outdoor activities.



Have You Considered...

Yoshino cherry is a medium-sized ornamental tree that displays an abundance of small pinkish-white flowers when in bloom, in the spring. This drought resistant tree is native to the Yoshino District in Japan and was introduced to the United States in 1902.

Latin Name: *Prunus x yedoensis*

Common Name(s): Yoshino cherry

Tree Type: Ornamental; deciduous

Sun and Water Requirements: Full to partial sun and requires regular watering (weekly)

Expected growth: Fast growing, 25-35ft high and 30-35ft wide.

Foliage: The leaves are deep green and branch out after the flowers have blossomed. The bark is a beautiful mocha brown with a metallic gloss.

Flowers: Pinkish-white blooms appear each spring before the leaves branch out.

Landscape Value: Yoshino cherry trees will add a beautiful and serene ambiance to your property. Its foliage changes from yellow to a reddish-brown in spring and fall — making it a year round centerpiece of your property.

Trivia: The Yoshino cherry tree is the star of the annual cherry festival in Washington, D.C. and closer to home, Branch Brook Park in NJ has the largest collection of cherry blossom trees in the U.S.



Invasive Pests Update

The presence of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has been confirmed all over our region. EAB is a small green beetle that has destroyed millions of ash trees in the U.S. since it found its way here from Asia in 2002. There is a quarantine on EAB host material from ash trees in New York — as well as parts of New Jersey and Connecticut. Movement of regulated materials is restricted in quarantined regions.

Talk to your Almstead arborist to find out how you can protect your ash trees from EAB. A health assessment of the ash trees in question as well as its overall contribution to the landscape and a cost analysis should be evaluated prior to treatment.



The Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB), has recently been found in New York City and Long Island, and authorities have established quarantine areas there. So far, the Hudson Valley has no known instance of ALB. Host trees include: maple (including Japanese maple), horse chestnut, mimosa, birch, katsura, ash, golden rain, London plane, sycamore, poplar, willow, mountain ash and elm. ALB has distinctive markings that are easy to recognize, including: a long antennae with black and white bands, a shiny, jet-black body, about 1" to 1 1/2" long, with white spots, and six legs with possible bluish-colored feet.

If you find ALB on your property please contact your Almstead arborist who can suggest the best course of action.

FALL/WINTER CALENDAR



November

Add mulch (Almstead produces mulch that is pathogen-free in several colors) • Prune back perennials • Ask your arborist about pruning your trees (disease-causing organisms are in a dormant state)



December

Protect evergreen plants from winter injury with antidesiccant • Protect figs, roses, and perennials with burlap screens • Remove dead and damaged limbs from trees with maintenance pruning



January

Remove heavy snow from trees and shrubs • Use calcium chloride or potassium chloride instead of salt on icy sidewalks.



February

Prune your trees • Apply a follow-up antidesiccant treatment • Schedule an inspection of your tree cables and lightning protection systems



Scan QR Code using your smart device

Request a Free Consultation!

Call your nearest branch office or visit www.almstead.com.

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