

Caring for your Colorado Landscape



FALL Smart Tip

Continuing to water your lawn into late fall will ensure optimal protection from insects and diseases as it enters the dormant season.

Answering the question of when's the best time to prune your tree

By Steve Geist, Senior Consulting Arborist at Swingle



One of the most time-honored questions (or controversies) in all of tree care is, "when is the best time of year to prune a tree?"

Much has been written over the years, with various and contradictory opinions and theories offered. In the day, pruning was referred to as tree surgery. For example, when Swingle was founded back in 1947, the company was known as Swingle Tree Surgeons.

For a moment, let's consider the notion of tree surgery. Before surgery, the "patient" should be in the best possible condition prior to the procedure, thus minimizing unintended side effects and issues, while decreasing the recovery time.

Dead and broken branches may be removed at any time during the year. Where the real controversy exists is when is the best time to prune live branches from a tree or shrub? **(continued inside)**

Emerald ash borer discovered in Lafayette



In early August, emerald ash borer (EAB) was discovered in Lafayette, Colorado - still within the quarantine area established to prevent the spread after first being discovered in Boulder in 2013. The pest has also been confirmed in Gunbarrel and Longmont, Colorado at this time.

It is still unclear whether the insect arrived in Lafayette on a natural path, or unknowingly by human transportation on contaminated wood or brush.

Across the Front Range, 1 out of 6 trees are ash trees.

"Having a new detection in this area was not unexpected, but certainly highlights the need for Front Range communities to be planning now, before EAB arrives," said Keith Wood, community forestry program manager for the Colorado State Forest Service. **(continued inside)**

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Swingle has offices in Denver, Firestone and Fort Collins - proudly serving residents across the front range of Colorado for 70 years.

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Stay connected with Swingle for inspiration and information.



Tom's Talk by Tom Tolkacz, CEO

Thank you for 70 years Colorado!

As our 70th anniversary year comes to a close, we owe our success to the people of the Colorado front range - the homeowners, businesses and communities we've been honored to serve over the last seven decades. I want to personally thank you for the continued opportunity to care for your lawn, tree and landscape needs. We're always here to answer your questions so don't hesitate to contact us.

The big news along the Front Range is the discovery of emerald ash borer (EAB) in Lafayette back in early August. Since its arrival in 2013, the pest has been confirmed in Boulder, Gunbarrel, Longmont and Lafayette.

I cannot stress enough how important it is for homeowners and property managers to view EAB as a significant threat. The good news is you have treatment options to prevent the destruction. The Cities of Denver, Edgewater, Lakewood, Westminster and many others have proactive plans to save their ash trees. The question is, do you? EAB is not a matter of if, but when.

On a lighter note, as crazy as it might sound, the holiday season is almost upon us. If you've driven around the Front Range during the holidays and found yourself speechless by the dazzling lighting display before you, chances are it was the work of the talented designers and installers at Swingle (*Denver Botanic Gardens and the Towns of Parker and Fort Collins are just a few examples*).

Whether it's your home, your business or your community, our holiday lighting is designed to make everyone feel merry and bright during the holidays. Our schedule fills quickly, so give us a call today for a free consultation. You won't be disappointed.

Thank you for your continued trust in Swingle, now and in the future.

Keeping the green side up,

Thomas R. Tolkacz, CEO

Why schedule a fall aeration and overseeding now?

A **fall aeration** helps open and break-up our dry, compact soil after a Colorado summer - allowing water and nutrients to reach the roots.

When we're out to do your aeration, we'll spread a **customized seed mixture** to fill in any spots - making your lawn lush the following spring.

*Must buy both services together to receive discount. Expires 10/31/17.



Fall aerations start now - call today to reserve your spot!



For questions or to schedule service:

Call **303.731.1324** or **970.688.7244**

Fall landscaping tips

Continue to mow and water regularly

There's a common misconception that when fall arrives, your lawn doesn't need as much attention as it did in the summer months. Not true. It still needs a fresh cut and steady watering in order to keep it healthy and strong as it enters dormancy. Because of the cooler temperatures, you can begin mowing a little shorter to prepare the blades for when snowfall arrives, and scale back, but don't eliminate, your watering practices.

Allow your lawn to breathe

After months of enduring the summer heat, the fall is a great time to allow your lawn to breathe. By aerating, or removing tiny portions of soil throughout your lawn, water, oxygen and fertilizer will penetrate deep within the root system providing optimal absorption for a green lawn come the spring.

Get rid of fallen leaves

Raking leaves is a chore few people enjoy. But it's important that you don't leave them piled high on your lawn to rot. Doing so encourages fungal diseases to start and spread undetected throughout the winter.

Feed your lawn with fertilizer

Your fall fertilization is perhaps the most important of the year. This specially blended fertilizer is designed to release slowly, providing the nutrients that your lawn will use to survive the winter and for maximum green-up next spring. While grass blades are not growing during the dormant season, the root system is still very much alive.

Now's the time to fill in those bare spots

Few lawns are spared the occasional bare spot here and there. The fall is the best time to repair those areas with overseeding, as the winter snow will keep the seed moist and enable it to better germinate come the spring.

Take care of weeds now

Weed control is part of your last fertilization for the season. By taking care of them before your lawn goes into dormancy, there's a better chance they won't return in the spring. Weeds are most vulnerable in the fall - so make sure you're taking advantage of that.

Answering the question of when's the best time to prune your tree

(continued from front cover)

In most cases, pruning in the dormant season (after the leaves have fallen from the tree) is the best time to surgically remove or prune live branches. From the tree or shrub's perspective, the dormant season is an ideal time.

Landscape plants spend their entire growing season storing energy to last through the winter and produce leaf and flower buds the following spring. Trees and shrubs are the strongest (in the best possible condition) during dormancy. This is when they are best able to defend the open pruning cuts from disease and decay organisms.

The dormant season is the ideal time to avoid encounters with insects and diseases of trees. These encounters would be unintended side effects.

Many insects are attracted to scents or smells that the trees emit from the open pruning cuts. Insects harm trees by feeding and boring into plant tissue.

Several insects also spread diseases along the way. Dutch elm disease, thousand cankers of walnut, blue stain of conifers, fire blight, and drippy blight of red oak are all diseases spread by insects. Most wood boring insects that will cause serious harm to trees and shrubs are also dormant or immobile during this time of year. Therefore, pruning in the dormant season will reduce or eliminate the insect attraction to open pruning sites.

Lastly, for leaf bearing trees, it is far easier to see the branch framework without the leaves. The question will often arise, "can an arborist pruning a tree tell if a branch is dead or alive without foliage?"

The answer is a definite yes. Leaf buds, branch flexibility, and bark appearance are all diagnostic clues for branch viability. Seeing the tree's framework is important in identifying crossing and interfering branches, seeing branch defects, and determining branch health - or which

branches are most important to the tree. Branches with more foliage buds are more important to the tree than branches with a few green tufts at the canopy edge. The weaker branches (which should be pruned) are more easily identified in the dormant season.

So, are there any pitfalls to dormant pruning? There are a few. Sheared plants may be damaged or scorched if pruned during cold weather.

Spring flowering shrubbery should also not be pruned in the winter, as the pruning will take the flower buds along with the pruning cuts - diminishing your spring display.

When in doubt, make it easy on yourself and call Swingle today to assess your pruning needs. Your consultant can determine what can be pruned during the dormant season and what should be done in the spring.

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Dormant Tree Pruning

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Applies to tree pruning services scheduled between December 1, 2017 - April 30, 2018. Residential customers only. Trees must be 30 feet and under. Other restrictions may apply.

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A history of outdoor holiday lighting

Outdoor holiday lighting has become a phenomenon within communities. From a humanitarian perspective, holiday lighting inspires emotion and can be infectious – spreading feelings of cheer and hope to everyone who sees them.

To understand how electric Christmas lights rose to popularity, we must first trace a bit of the history of the Christmas tree. **For it was there that Thomas Edison first advertised his new electric Christmas lights for the masses.**

By 1856, candle-adorned Christmas trees were incredibly popular. But there were several issues with candle-adorned Christmas trees, most notably flammability. A safer solution was needed and in 1882 Edison displayed the first electrically-lit Christmas tree in a prominent New York City home.

Despite the popularity, electric Christmas lights remained only for the rich (in 1900, a sixteen-foot strand of lights cost around \$12 – about \$300 today). But by the 1920's, due to technological advances and strong business competition, they became attainable to all.

The Christmas tree took on a new meaning during the darkest days of World War II. Millions of people viewed them as symbols of hope and peace for the future. The war forced many people to limit their spending, but the electrically-lit Christmas tree, and what it stood for, never lost popularity.

By the end of World War II, Joseph H. Ward of Noma Electric Company said, **“This is the first year since the war that there is enough electrical power and merchandise to really go all out.”**

While many community celebrations still focused on electrically-lit trees as their focal point, lights were now strung elsewhere throughout towns, cities and communities across the nation – expanding the feeling of hope and peace originally created by the electrically-lit Christmas tree during the war.

According to Minami International Corporation, a leading supplier of Christmas lights, eighty million homes are decorated each year, with more than 150 million light sets sold annually. And it doesn't appear to be slowing down.

See more holiday lighting photos at myswingle.com

*Lights must be installed by 11/10/17 for 10% discount. Minimum order \$750. Other restrictions apply.

Emerald ash borer discovered in Lafayette

(continued from front cover)

Lafayette alone has approximately 22,000 ash trees and recommends residents take action now to assess treatment for their ash trees.

Emerald ash borer is considered the most destructive forest pest ever in North America. It is responsible for killing more than 50 million ash trees in 29 states. Across the front range of Colorado, 1 out of 6 trees are at risk.

Here are some tips from the Colorado State Forest Service regarding emerald ash borer:

Determine if you have an ash tree

Identifying features of ash trees include compound leaves

with 5 to 9 leaflets; leaflets, buds and branches growing directly opposite from one another; diamond-shaped bark ridges.

If you have an ash tree, start planning

Decide if the overall health of the tree merits current or future treatment or if it would be best to remove and replace it.

Recognize signs of EAB infestation

Be on the lookout for thinning of leaves in the upper tree canopy, 1/8-inch D-shaped holes on the bark and vertical bark splitting with winding S-shaped tunnels underneath.

Be aware of EAB impostors

Other insects like lilac/ash borer, ash bark beetle and flat-headed apple tree borer may look like EAB or cause similar tree symptoms.

Help prevent further spread of EAB

Do not transport ash or any other untreated ash wood products, to other locations. Boulder County and some surrounding areas are under quarantine.



What to plant instead of an ash tree

Since the discovery of EAB (emerald ash borer) in Boulder back in 2013, we're often asked to recommend alternatives to an ash tree - especially for a new planting.

For a brutal south or west facing exposure:

exposure: Hackberry, Honeylocust, Linden, Buckeye, Horsechestnut, Coffeetree, Elm, Silver Maple, Catalpa, Hawthorn, Sycamore, Planetree, Ornamental Pear, and members of the White Oak family (English Oak, Swamp White Oak, Bur Oak).

For less brutal locations like east or north facing exposures:

'Whitespire' Birch, Purple and Tri-color Beech, Sugar Maple, Red Maple, Wasatch Maple, Red Oak, Scarlet Oak, 'Texas Red' Oak, Norway Maple, Serviceberry, Redbud, Yellowwood, Tulip Poplar, Mountain Ash, Japanese Pagoda-Tree, Hornbeam, Gingko, and Alder.

There are some trees we would not place into consideration...

EVER! These include any species of Willow, Cottonwood, Russian Olive, Tree-of-Heaven, Sumac, Buckthorn, Chokecherry, Siberian Elm, Boxelder, and Mulberry.



Call today for a free ash tree evaluation or with any questions about what new trees you should plant on your property

Your lawn over the next six months

Lawn Mites: Desiccation is a state of extreme dryness, when water is lost at a faster rate than it's replaced. This not only causes stress to the root system, but it also leaves your lawn more susceptible to mite attacks.

Damage usually coincides with dry winter and/or spring months from December through May. Damaged areas of your lawn will appear brown and straw like. These areas will not be visible until your lawn begins to turn green during the spring. In some cases, your lawn may not be able to recover.

Prevention: Winter and dry season watering. Pay special attention to hot spots around trees, evergreens and sloped areas, as well as south and west facing areas of your lawn receiving direct sun, which are more prone to quick water evaporation. Periodic watering will make these areas less attractive to mites.



If you suspect you have lawn mites as the season progresses, call us for a free property evaluation.

FALL Checklist

- Move clay/fragile pots indoors
- Shred dead leaves for soil compost
- Remove annuals and mulch perennials
- Cover/store patio furniture
- Point down spouts away from the house
- Turn off/drain outdoor faucets
- Drain garden hoses and store inside
- Replace dead bulbs in outdoor lights

A reminder to enjoy the leaves

and schedule your fall services!

- **Aeration & Overseeding**
- **Fall lawn fertilization**
- **Insect control**
- **Soil conditioner**

*Must buy both services together to receive discount. Expires 10/31/17.

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