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**Quality Landscape Maintenance, Design
and Installation**

Winter Newsletter

By: Ben Hall

Many people are unsure of what type of activities can be performed in their landscapes during the cold winter months. Trees are bare, perennials have gone dormant, summer annuals have long since died and maybe there is a white layer of snow on the ground. While winter is not a recommended time to plant, it is an excellent time to prune both trees and shrubs. Winter is a particularly good time to perform rejuvenation pruning of overgrown shrubs.

Conventional pruning concentrates on reducing the shrubs overall size by removing the small branches on the outer edges. The rejuvenation process goes much deeper into the interior of the shrub and involves the removal of larger branches. As shrubs grow and are conventionally pruned year after year, they begin to develop dense growth on their outer edges and weak or non-existent growth in their centers. This dense growth on the fringe of the shrub can be a haven for insect and disease problems, because the masses of closely packed leaves interfere with proper air flow and provide a shelter for insect pests. If conditions are favorable, the lack of air flow can promote fungal diseases which can harm the shrub.

The proper way to address this problem is to remove approximately one quarter of the shrubs total mass by taking branches out of the shrubs interior. It is important not to reduce the shrub by more than one quarter, because the shrub needs the leaf area to provide energy in the spring and summer. Large shrubs which are particularly overgrown and in need of serious rejuvenation pruning should have the work spaced out over several years so as not to remove more than one quarter at any one time.

There will be a considerable aesthetic difference after this type of pruning is performed, the shrubs will appear much thinner and more transparent now that their overall density has been reduced. But remember that rejuvenation pruning does not need to be performed every year, so the visual impact of this pruning probably needs to be experienced only every three to five years.

Shrubs that typically benefit from rejuvenation pruning are Yews, Burning Bush, Viburnum, 'Manhattan' Euonymus, Red Twig Dogwood, Azaleas and Rhododendron. Forsythia also benefits from this type of hard pruning, but it is best performed in spring just after the shrub has flowered. Please contact MainScapes, Inc. this winter for any of your pruning needs.



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Tree and Shrub Care By: Rob Meier

Snow, ice, sleet and very cold temperatures, can you believe spring is just a couple of months away. Now is a great time to make sure the trees and shrubs on your property get the care they deserve as well. With the cost of removing a tree ranging from \$300 to \$1,000 or more, and the cost of installing a new tree ranging from \$300 on up, it makes sense to invest in and protect the trees and shrubs that are currently on your property. You can protect your landscape by implementing an Integrated Pest Management Program for trees and shrubs. The emphasis of this program is to keep pesticide usage to a minimum, encourage natural plant defenses, and when a pesticide is needed, to use the pesticide with the lowest impact to the environment as possible.

Here's how an IPM program works. First an assessment of the trees and shrubs on the property is performed. This will identify the kinds of plants on site, the number of plants and identify the potential problem areas. The key part of the program is regular monitoring of your property. This is important because it will identify potential problems before they get out of control. If a pest is discovered but the pest has natural enemies on site, chances are it will not be necessary to spray to control the pest. On the other hand if there are no natural defenses present, then the most appropriate, lowest impact pesticide is used. And as stated earlier, an IPM program uses the pesticide that gives the best control of a particular pest while minimizing the impact to the environment. The goal is to have an environment that takes care of itself and one that needs as little human intervention as possible.



“Life Begins”

Prevent this process from happening!



“Full Grown”

Step By Step - Integrated Pest Management


- Step 1. Bi-monthly inspections of property plant material, March through October, with written reports detailing the findings.
- Step 2. Early spring application of horticultural oil to all appropriate plants that have overwintering eggs and/or insects present. This will control the insect population prior to the hatch.
- Step 3. Throughout the season applications for disease and insects when it's appropriate.
- Step 4. Fertilization of all appropriate plants. In general this will be the younger less established plants versus the more mature established plants. Studies are showing excess fertilizer increases insect size and populations.

Integrated Pest Management is a great way to protect the trees and shrubs on your property with minimum use of pesticides. If you have questions or concerns about IPM please give us a call at 301-260-0190 or e-mail rob@mainscapes.com.

FAQ's

MainScapes, Inc. knows many of our clients like to pay attention to what is going on with their landscaping. We get a lot of calls year after year with questions and concerns about pests, fungus spots, insecticides etc... We wanted to take some of your frequently asked questions and answer them for you in this section of our newsletter.

Does mulch placed in landscape beds attract Termites or wood eating insects?

Based on recent research at the University of Maryland and elsewhere, properly applied mulch is not the source of residential termite problems. Shredded hardwood bark mulch is a poor food source for Termites, and any Termites that are found in the mulch are more than likely exploiting the moisture  found under the mulch layer and not actually feeding on the mulch. In fact, research has shown that Termites actually prefer gravel mulch to bark mulch because the gravel mulch retains more moisture underneath it. There are certain precautions that should be exercised when applying mulch around buildings, both to reduce potential insect problems and ensure plant health. Never allow mulch to accumulate to more than three inches, mulch that is too deep can literally smother root systems, encourage fungal growth and deep mulch will provide a home for rodents. Mulch should also not be allowed to contact ground level windows or siding. In summary, properly applied mulch is beneficial to your landscaping and mulch does not provide food for termites.

When are the Perennials cut back?

Well, that depends on the type of perennial, and the desire of the community. Typically perennials are cut back when the foliage changes color and dries. This usually occurs in the fall at which time we are completing our leaf clean-up. Some examples would be Daylily & Purple Cone Flower. Not all perennials dry up in the fall. These are what we call Evergreen perennials, they only need minor pruning periodically through the year. Some examples would be Bergenia and Heuchera. Finally, there are many opinions regarding Ornamental grasses, this is when we let the community decide. Some would like the tidy appearance in the winter and others enjoy the light color tones in the winter. As for the grasses, they don't mind either way, as long as they are cut back before the new growth appears in the spring.

Does MainScapes, Inc. close its doors in the winter?

No, we do not close for the winter. We do take time off so we are fresh and alert for the spring rush. MainScapes, Inc. inspects all equipment, tools and vehicles. Anything broken beyond repair is thrown away. Only the best equipment is used on our properties and new equipment is purchased as needed. Training and certifications are completed as well as reviewing the previous years work and implementing changes to better service our customers.



Continuing Our Education

At MainScapes, Inc. we are always encouraging our employees to better their education so they can be professionals within the industry. Listed below are courses that have been completed this winter by MainScapes Managers and Supervisors.

Maryland Arborist Association Winter Seminar
Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute Training Program and Certification
University of Maryland Advanced Integrated Pest Management Short Course
Ornamental Pest Management Conference sponsored by The University of Maryland



If your question was not answered please feel free to contact our office by phone, fax or email at:

Info@mainscapes.com

Our newsletter will be coming out every quarter so that we may keep you informed on upcoming events and important information.

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