

## Fall Time Tree Care Tips

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As the days shorten and trees begin to exhibit autumn color, we know that one of our climate's most perfect times to enjoy the outdoors has finally arrived. Fall is nature's transformation period from summer to winter. It's when our trees make internal changes to prepare them for winter's rest *and* next spring's growth. For the homeowner, it is important to help their trees during this important process. Here are three tips to help your tree this fall.

- 1) **Limit Pruning to Dead, Dying, Diseased or "Unsafe" Branches.** Unless necessary for safety reasons, don't cut live limbs, branches, or stems. During fall, your tree is shutting down its photosynthetic process for the year and storing critical energy reserves throughout the tree. Incorrect pruning can remove stored sugars and starches needed for next spring's growth and function.
- 2) **Check Tree Staking and Support:** Research shows that tree staking and support is helpful only on new trees that are large and at risk of pivoting during high winds. Otherwise tree staking and support is not necessary. Your goal should be to remove any staking or support apparatus as soon as the tree is able to stand on it's on. If staking is still needed, be sure to retighten enough for support, but to allow some tree movement.
- 3) **Make Tree Planting Decisions:** Tree planting is often an extemporaneous act that leaves the homeowner wondering why things didn't turn out as hoped. Successful tree planting happens when we do our homework and make decisions to plant the right tree in the right place. That means doing a site analysis that takes into account moisture, sun, growing space, soil texture, pH, drainage, and even how the property is to be used. Arming yourself with this information will make the job of selecting a tree species much easier and more rewarding.