TREE TIPS

TREE & SHRUB CARE FROM BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS

BY APPOINTMENT
TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
TREE SURGEONS
THE F.A. BARTLETT TREE EXPERT CO. LTD

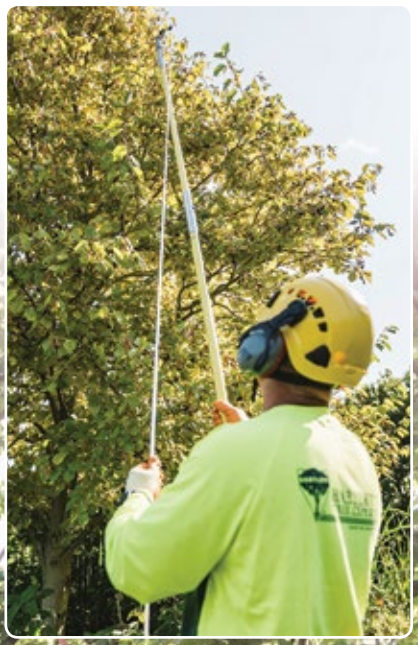
Bartlett offers a full range of pruning expertise

There are a variety of pruning techniques to fulfill landscape and tree health goals. Bartlett arborists are trained to evaluate trees' attributes, and they know what type of pruning will achieve different objectives. Your Bartlett Arborist Representative will explain the reasons for the pruning recommendations during your consultation.

In addition to pruning dead and dying branches for tree health and safety, specific pruning can be performed to accomplish the following:

- Reduce wind resistance and subsequent storm damage
- Improve shape or eliminate interference with structures
- Increase the amount of light for grass or ground cover under a tree
- Improve the view of the countryside, shoreline or other desirable features
- Give young trees a strong framework for future growth

Bartlett also provides shrub pruning (not to be confused with shrub shearing) and fruit tree pruning. Plus, we can develop and maintain formal pruning styles, including pollarding, pleaching, espalier, and topiary.



Silver leaf fungal disease

by Glynn Percival, PhD
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Silver leaf (*Chondrostereum purpureum*) is a worldwide fungal disease. Apple, pear, cherry, plum, poplar, willow, hawthorn, laburnum, rhododendron and rose species are all susceptible to attack. In addition, the fungus can move between different host plants. For example, silver leaf on peach will also cross-infect apple, etc.

This disease gets its name from the telltale silvery sheen that appears on the leaves of infected trees.

Symptoms

The silver leaf fungus enters the tree through wounds caused by mechanical, animal or environmental damage. The initial stages of decay appear as a reddish-brown stain. As decay advances, the stain disappears and the wood becomes bleached. In the final stages of decay, the wood is dry, light in weight, and white-mottled to pale yellow in colour.

The characteristic symptom of silver leaf is a silvery sheen on the foliage. Toxins and enzymes in the

(continued on page 2)

Silver leaf *(continued from page 1)*

sap produced by the fungus damage leaf cells. Light reflects through these damaged cells, giving a silvery effect to infected foliage.

Leaves over the whole tree may be silvered if the fungus enters through a large wound whereas entry through smaller wounds may produce symptoms on just one branch.

The extent of silvering depends on tree species, age, vigour, and the degree of infection. Some species, such as apples, show some silvering symptoms and then recover. Others become progressively more silvered and die.

Silver leaf infection can cause leaves to die.

Consequences of silver leaf infection include:

- Reduced leaf area
- Death of leaves, leading to a loss of nutrient reserves and subsequent plant starvation and death
- Reduced root growth, causing poor nutrition and an increased susceptibility to *Phytophthora* root rot diseases
- Smaller and fewer fruit
- Reduced colour in fruit
- Poor fruit storage
- Tree death

Management

The fungus produces most of its infectious spores in autumn and winter. It is best to prune susceptible plants now (before cold weather arrives)—fewer spores are present in the atmosphere, and pruning wounds, the main point of entry for spores, heal more quickly.

Where silver leaf develops, the affected branch should be removed as a priority. Cutting equipment should be disinfected. Pruned material should be removed immediately (burned or chipped), given that fruiting bodies will still form if left lying on the ground.

Protecting pruning wounds using fungicide paints is recommended.

Plant vigour is an important factor in increasing resistance to attack and/or reducing severity of symptoms. Keep vigour high by fertilisation, watering and mulching. Phosphite sprays and/or soil drenches to stimulate tree vitality are also recommended.

An example of fungal staining of internal tissues.

If a tree succumbs to silver leaf fungal disease and dies, it should be removed, along with the stump; or if the stump remains, it should be covered with soil to smother the fruiting bodies.

Your Bartlett Arborist Representative can assist and advise about all of these procedures.

Fun with trees

Make some autumn leaf coasters

The first step of this project is to gather and press a variety of leaves. Prepare more leaves than needed to give yourself creative options. You'll have a few weeks while the leaves flatten to get four white ceramic tiles, waterproof decoupage glue (such as Décopatch or Mod Podge), a small paint brush, and some felt. Then comes the fun! Arrange flat leaves on the tiles, fastening them down with thin layers of glue. Continue applying layers, allowing the tiles to dry between each coat, until all the leaves are secure and you are pleased with the surface. Don't worry if it looks milky, the glue will dry clear. Last, glue felt to the underside of the tiles to finish your coasters. Cheers!

TREE FOCUS:

Willow *(Salix* spp.*)*

History

Willow is a genus of 300 species of deciduous trees found in habitats ranging from lowland meadows and river banks to sand dunes and mountain screes. These species have a wide diversity of bark colour (red, yellow, orange, white) and growth forms (weeping, columnar, corkscrew, rounded). Willows make ideal screens and windbreaks and can be easily grown from hardwood cuttings.

Culture

- Prefer deep, moist but well-drained soil in full sun
- Tolerant of shallow chalk soil
- Prefer soils with a pH range of 5-7.5. Addition of organic matter to the soil is highly recommended
- Respond extremely well to fertilisation and mulching

Concerns

- Rabbit and deer are partial to willows, so protection may be necessary
- Anthracnose, scab and canker are fungal diseases that can affect willows
- Brownish-black willow aphids may affect plants in late summer

Bartlett Management Practices

- Inspect for animal damage, and apply repellent to tree trunk and branches
- Prune out cankers and apply an appropriate fungicide. Treatments in the spring can control fungal diseases such as anthracnose and scab
- Mulching, fertilisation and watering to improve tree vigour
- Treatments to control insect pests from May onwards

WONDERS OF NATURE

The amazing baobab tree

Baobab (*Adansonia* spp.) trees are mostly found in arid regions of Madagascar and mainland Africa. Another common name for these trees is 'the tree of life' because they can provide shelter, clothing, food, and water for animals and humans.

The baobab reaches heights of 5 to 30 metres and trunk diameters of 7 to 11 metres. A trunk can hold up to 120,000 litres of water. Mature trees are usually hollow. The cork-like bark and huge trunk are fire resistant and can be used for making cloth and rope. The leaves are used as condiments and medicines. The fruit, called monkey bread, is edible and full of vitamin C.

Sonic tomograph system detects decay

All trees, irrespective of species, will attract some form of decay fungi towards the end of their life. These wood decay-fungi break down and "digest" sound wood. Eventually a stage is reached where the extent of decayed wood is greater than that of sound wood and the tree poses a potential risk, especially if situated near a building or area where people congregate. In these circumstances a risk assessment is made.

Bartlett Tree Experts uses a system known as a PiCUS Sonic Tomograph to make these tree risk assessments in specific or difficult conditions. A PiCUS system allows us to measure the thickness of the residual wall of a tree and compare with internal defects such as cavities or decay non-invasively. Most often these sonic tomograms are recorded at or near ground level of trees. However, acoustic tomograms also reveal important safety information about the breaking risk near branch wounds and above-ground cavities.

A Bartlett arborist assessing the interior of a tree with a PiCUS sonic tomograph.

Bartlett at the Woburn Abbey Garden Show

In June our Bedford office had a great time at Bedfordshire's ever popular Woburn Abbey Garden Show. Bartlett Arborist Representative Tim Brown talked with attendees about tree care and the services we offer. Meanwhile, our crew entertained children with activities such as throwline competitions with bells. The kids also especially enjoyed watching and cheering on the climbing demonstrations given by the crew.

Ready for the opening of the Woburn Abbey Garden Show.

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