



Maintaining Healthy Trees and Shrubs

Put plenty of mulch around your tree to prevent the surrounding soil from drying out, and to protect the trunk from lawn mowers and strimmers.

Place wood chips to a height of around 10 centimeters around your tree, but no higher, or the trunk may decay.



Healthy Swedish Birch

Water your trees, especially if they are newly planted, and during a hot summer. Most garden centres sell soil moisture probes for less than five pounds. Well worth the investment.

Avoid disturbing or cutting tree roots if building or construction work is ongoing. This form of damage can slowly kill your tree.



Healthy Corkscrew Hazel

Inspect for pests such as aphids, scale, leaf hoppers, caterpillars, mites, leaf miners etc., and have them treated as necessary.

Check for fungal diseases such as leaf spots and blotches, scab, powdery mildews and blossom wilt etc. Have your Arborist apply fungicide sprays if necessary.

Fertilise 2-3 times during summer with a general purpose fertiliser.

Importantly please remember that trees have occupants during the summer. Birds such as house sparrows and blackbirds will be nesting in trees so check before carrying out any work. ■

Fruit Trees for Bees

Not only are bees beneficial for the production of honey but they are responsible for pollinating our major food and crop plants that are necessary for survival. Consequently, one of the most frequently asked questions at the Bartlett Research Laboratory is which trees are best for bees? One surprising answer is that with cultivated varieties, generally only single flowered types are suitable, most double flowered varieties like cherry or rose are sterile and therefore of little use to anything but aphids. With horticulture driven by a demand for superior aesthetics, double and more complex flowers are almost the norm in many cherry, apple and rose varieties these days.

Traditional fruit trees, however, are regarded as excellent sources of pollen and nectar for bees. The following species have been highlighted as particularly useful.

Almond (*Prunus dulcis*):

One of the earliest fruit trees to flower that produce profuse quantities of nectar.

Apple (*Malus pumila*):

Can be grown as cordons and



‘bush’ forms suitable for small gardens. A huge range of varieties exist, flowering from early April to late May. Good nectar producer.

Cherries (*Prunus cerasus*):

Large trees that are good nectar producers.

Peach & nectarine (*Prunus persica*):

Early flowering varieties exist that are regarded as good nectar producers.

Pear (*Prunus communis*):

Flowers in March to April, however, the nectar is weak and rarely collected.

Plum (*Prunus domestica*) and Quince (*Cydonia oblonga*):

Both species are regarded as a good nectar source. ■



Electronic Tree Tips!

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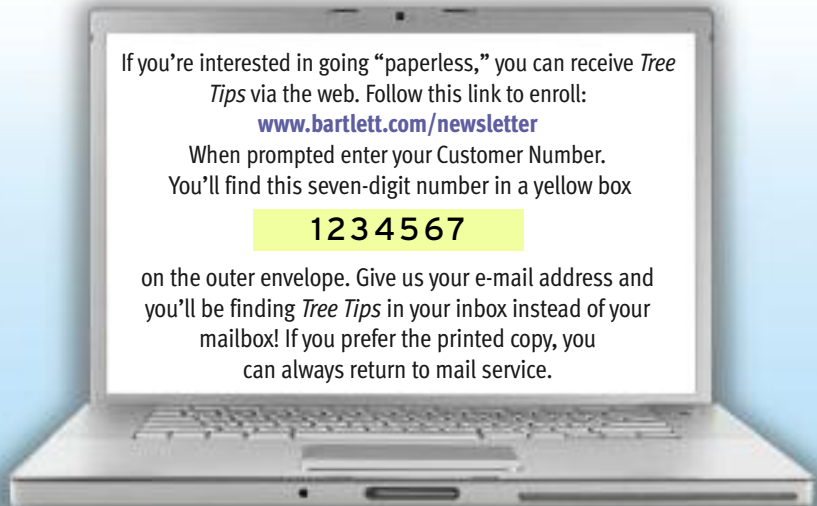
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on the outer envelope. Give us your e-mail address and you'll be finding *Tree Tips* in your inbox instead of your mailbox! If you prefer the printed copy, you can always return to mail service.



Disease Alert

Kabatina shoot blight of conifer

Kabatina juniperi and/or *K.thujae*, are the casual agents of kabatina shoot blight. This disease commonly infects many juniperus species and thuja species as well as Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*), cypress (*Cupressus species*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), fir (*Abies species*), and yew (*Taxus species*). Shoots infected with kabatina show no symptoms during the season they are infected. Early the following spring the infected foliage turns pale green to yellow. As the season progresses infected shoots turn

brown and die. Black pinhead-sized fruiting structures often appear at the base of dead twigs. In addition, kabatina fungi generally invade stressed plants that have been weakened for example by chemical, drought and/or cold temperatures.

Remedial treatments include pruning out and destroying dead and infected twigs and branches as well as avoiding frequent overhead irrigation that wets the foliage. If the plants are shaded or

crowded, adjacent plants should be pruned to improve air circulation and sunlight penetration. No synthetic fungicides are registered for the control of kabatina shoot blight. Recently, however, a range of organic 'plant defense stimulating' products have been released commercially that claim to reduce disease severity by enhancing the trees own naturally occurring defense systems.

"In house" Bartlett research trials show some of these products possess useful disease reducing properties and may help in the suppression of kabatina. ■



Kabatina shoot blight



Kabatina shoot blight

Expect Canker and Dieback Diseases in Spring and Summer

While prolonged frosts are normally regarded as beneficial to trees as insect eggs and fungal spore populations are reduced, there are, however, one group of diseases that actually increase in response to this type of weather. Canker diseases are caused primarily by weakly pathogenic fungi that invade twigs, branches and stems through frost-induced wounds. Canker pathogens generally colonize the outer rings of sapwood causing sunken lesions that can girdle the infected plant part at the site of infection. In some cases, canker fungi will colonize dead twigs and branches and then progress into adjacent living tissue during periods of stress. Water deficiency and freezing injury are the two most common predisposing stress factors to canker pathogens.

UK and Ireland have experienced extremely low winter temperatures that will result in canker and dieback on many landscape plants. Symptoms will not become evident until spring when affected portions of the plant do not leaf out. In many



instances, branches and stems may produce leaves in spring and then collapse later in the growing season when demand for water increases. Species that are very prone to canker following freeze injury include: rhododendron, azalea, boxwood, Japanese holly, dogwood, cherry, crabapple, Leyland cypress, and Japanese maple.

Arborists control canker by:

- 1 Pruning out diseased branches and excising cankers when observed.
- 2 Painting existing cankers and excised canker areas with the fungicidal paint Bezel.
- 3 Spring or autumn-fertilisation to improve plant vitality.
- 4 Summer mulching and irrigation.
- 5 Winter pruning (cleaning), thinning and reduction as needed. ■

Pest Watch: Scale

Scale are small, 1–2mm long, sap feeding insects that are common and widespread in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Scale insects tend to remain static on trees and feed by inserting their stylets into plant tissue. Females usually lay hundreds of eggs either under wax scales, coverings of woolly wax or under their bodies. Colonies of nymphs and mature females infest leaves, stems and fruits feeding on sap and excreting honey dew so encouraging growth of sooty mould. Persistent infestations weaken growth and make plants unsightly. The most widespread and troublesome scale species of trees include horsechestnut scale, (*Pulvinaria regalis*) and beech scale, (*Cryptococcus fagisuga*).

Until recently control of scale was problematic. The basic approach for most species was to apply spray oil in combination with a residual insecticide to try and coincide with when the eggs hatched and scale crawlers began to emerge.

Season long control of scale can now be achieved by a single soil drench around the base of the tree with the systemic insecticide Admire. Admire is applied either in February/ March or



Wysteria scale



Horsechestnut scale

October/November. Generally an October/November drench will provide the greatest degree of control over the following growing season.

Once your Arborist has scale under control, appropriate fertilisation, mulching and irrigation is generally recommended to improve tree vitality. ■



Scale crawlers on beech

Summertime...and the living's easy

...well not yet, but in these troubled times many people are growing their own fruit and veg to make their funds go further. In increasing numbers our clients are turning unused lawns and flower beds into vegetable plots, renting allotments and looking to forgotten fruit trees to be bountiful again. At Bartlett Consulting we have had many enquires as to how this can be done.

Here are a few tips to get started, if you have not bothered much with the trees for a while, don't expect miracles in the first year, but you can help the tree give you the best of what it can produce. Cleanliness and feeding are key here; most of the rusts and scabs that blemish leaves and fruit are spread from dead leaves and shriveled fruit left from the previous year. Rake everything up and clear away. In the tree crown pull off or knock down all old fruit remains. If possible clear as much competing vegetation from underneath the crown of the tree.

To protect against codling moth (that's the thing that lays grubs and makes the insides of apples black), place wide grease bands around tree stems at about 0.5m. They can be bought cheaply at garden centers or made from strips of cloth and any sticky substance. But keep whatever you use from direct contact with the bark.

At ground level trees can be given a flying start by heavily mulching the area around the stem for as far out as possible, but a 2m radius is good enough. Sprinkle some slow release fertilizer on the surface. Mulch deeply with garden compost or wood chips to a depth of 20cm. This will both feed and keep moisture levels up within the tree roots during summer months.

If you are able this spring, prune out small unfruitful twigs and branches. Wait until small fruit can be seen and with secateurs and (if need be) a hand saw remove unwanted smallwood. This will aid air flow through the tree and help ripening later.



To keep early summer pests at bay, spray the tree, even if its only the parts you can easily reach with a soap wash. It's eco-friendly and won't taint the fruit. Repeat the treatment every 3–4 weeks until mid summer to keep aphids and caterpillars under control. Encourage small birds especially blue tits, into the tree, by hanging nut feeders within it.

There's not much else needed in the first year. If you want better quality but fewer fruits, pick off about a third of the lesser quality fruit in early summer. If we have a dry period, water the tree base by allowing water to trickle onto the mulched area for an hour or so every other evening.

When you realise you can, with a few simple measures, get good quality fruit for free, you may want to talk to one of the Bartlett Arborists about preparing the tree for the future. If the feeding, mulching and pest control are a bit daunting, we have teams with the latest equipment to do all this for you. If you want, our Arborists will use organic products. For owners of several trees and orchards, our consultancy advisors can put together management plans. If we see the fruits, will identify the variety of tree and advise you on how to care for it. ■

Tree Factoids

Question: I have two Katy apple trees that produce huge amounts of fruit, but lose most of it during the spring and summer. I also find lots of insects in the fruit.

Mr I Innes, Swaffham Bulbeck, Cambridge

Answer: Fruit loss early in the season is generally due to lack of pollination or insect attack. In your case I suspect the latter. Without a diagnostic sample it is hard to identify the pest causing the problem, however, we always recommend a horticultural oil plus insecticide spray early in the season i.e. as the buds are starting the flush and the leaves expand. We then generally recommend a second spray just after flowering to protect the developing fruit.

Question: I have a large London plane sycamore tree in my front yard, and for the past three years it has dropped most of its leaves in spring. Any idea what could be wrong with the tree?

Mrs Patel, Wandsworth, London

Answer: It sounds like your tree is infected with anthracnose, a fungal disease that favors cool, wet springs and causes premature leaf drop in London plane. Look closely at the leaves in spring. If they develop a black streak along the mid vein of the leaf that starts to spread out across the entire leaf surface then this is anthracnose. You can try to prevent its recurrence by raking up fallen leaves and burning them. Do not compost as the composting process will not kill the fungal spores that re-infect the following year's growth. Because the tree is so large then spraying is probably unfeasible. In these cases we recommend injection of fungicide into the tree trunk. **Dr Glynn Percival**

Question: I bought a Magnolia tree six years ago. It flowered for the first two years but has not for the past four. Do you know why?

Mr C Nicholls, Wakefield, Yorkshire

Answer: There are several reasons as to why a Magnolia does not flower. Buds will not form if the tree is too heavily shaded or over exposure of the tree can lead to wind scorch and drying conditions that either prevent bud formation in the first place or cause exiting buds to drop off. Frosts can also damage flower buds early in the growing season. Fertilise with high potash compounds to help stimulate flower bud formation. Apply either now or wait until autumn. **Dr Glynn Percival**

The ancient Druids lit bonfires of Scots Pine at the winter solstice to call back the sun.



The Ginkgo, an ancient tree, is revered in Japan as a symbol of strength and endurance. The sumo wrestler's topknot is formed to resemble a Ginkgo leaf.



Cherry stones are used to predict the year of a girl's marriage, using the counting rhyme "This year, next year, sometime, never".



Celtic warriors made their shields from Aspen wood, which was thought to protect the bearer from physical and psychic harm.



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