



DECEMBER 2010

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

Welcome to the December Tree Link



With apologies to a well-known holiday song, the weather outside may be "frightful" but we hope this edition will be "delightful!"

La Nina promises us cold weather and snow through spring, so it is prudent to monitor your trees this winter. If you wake to find a blanket of the white stuff, consider brushing snow off of young trees before damage occurs. Broadleaf evergreen trees and deciduous trees that retain their leaves into winter are species that are particularly susceptible to breakage during heavy snow loads.

The snow must go on... Mulching acts like a blanket to protect root zones, but make restoration planting in Bellevue sure to keep it away from trunks to prevent gnaw-ing critters, like mice, from a free meal at the expense of your newly-planted trees! To protect from rodent damage, you can wrap the lower part of a tree's trunk in burlap, hard plastic or hardware cloth. Just remember to remove it in spring, when the tree begins to grow.

Evergreen trees continue to lose moisture through their leaves during the winter and will benefit from a deep watering when the soil is cool, but not frozen.

Late winter is a good time to prune damaged, dead, or broken limbs of trees. You can also look for those branches that are crossing and rubbing. Make sure you are making good cuts that will seal quickly. For more information about pruning, visit http://www.treesaregood.com/treecare/pruning_young.aspx

Here's wishing you a wonderful holiday season.

Read on to find the following topics in this month's Tree Link:

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Remember, if you have a story or project that you would like to share in Tree Link, feel free to contact me at 360-902-1703 or anyone else from the [Urban Forestry Team](#).

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant." - Anne Bradstreet

COORDINATOR'S CORNER



I am writing my Coordinator's Corner from home this month...snowed in before Thanksgiving! If that is any indication of the winter we have coming, we'd all better do a little extra for the trees! Inspect your trees to see if more mulch is needed for extra insulation in the root zone, if the branch unions are strong, and if you need an arborist to come for a visit. Many trees are needlessly topped or removed this time of the year because homeowners are worried. If you are concerned about trees around your home, hire an ISA Certified Arborist to inspect your trees. More information can be found on our website at

www.dnr.wa.gov/urbanforestry.

Now is also the time to think about your proposal for [2011 Community Forestry Assistance Grants](#), provided with funding assistance from the USDA Forest Service. The application is available on our website, and we are happy to answer any questions you may have. Just call 1-800-523-TREE or email urban_forestry@dnr.wa.gov.

Linden, Nicki, and I would like to wish all of you a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season!

MANAGING YOUR TREES? TOPPING IS NOT THE ANSWER!

Tree Topping - Tree Height Management/ Safety

Are you looking at a tree on your property, wondering what steps you need to take to make sure it's manageable? If you are considering topping your tree, please **don't!**



Bushy regrowth after topping

Topping trees is not sustainable nor is it a cost-effective way to manage your trees. Most healthy trees only need occasional pruning; every five to ten years. But when a tree is cut back indiscriminately, it responds by growing multiple branch-like shoots that compete for dominance. The resulting weak, bushy re-growth quickly reaches the same size as the tree's original height.

As they grow and the shoots increase in weight, the branches become susceptible to breakage and damage during storms and must be continually pruned, sometimes annually, to avoid potentially hazardous branch failures. Ironically, rather than creating a safer tree, topping can actually create a greater hazard.

If it's necessary to lower the height of a tree that already exists on your property, always consult a [certified arborist](#) for tree care. An acceptable method of pruning to reduce the height of a tree is called a reduction cut. This technique involves cutting branches back to a lower branch fork that is *at least one-third* the diameter of the limb being removed. When done correctly, the lateral branch is strong enough to outgrow the branches below it and the tree will maintain its natural form. NOTE: The technique is not appropriate on single-leader trees (like evergreens) unless it is to remove multiple leaders.

It is important to remember that as trees grow, they develop structure and strength in response to the environment. While trees can fail due to disease, insect infestation or human-caused activities, a tree will not fall over just because it is tall. If you are concerned with the health and safety of your tree, call a certified arborist to assess its condition.

Certified arborists and other legitimate landscape professionals do not practice tree topping. If problems caused by a tree cannot be solved through acceptable management practices, the tree should be removed and replaced with different tree or plant material more appropriate for the site.

Property owners need to make wise decisions before installing plant material that will outgrow the available space. Make sure you think about the mature size (height and breadth) of a tree and where it will grow before you plant it.

For more information on tree care, go to [DNR's Urban and Community Forestry Program](#) website.

Arborists and plant scientists agree that tree topping is not an appropriate tree management practice. Topping, defined as severely cutting back and removing large branches in a mature tree, is often undertaken with a goal to reduce the height and increase the safety of a tree. But in fact, topping does just the opposite.

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Tree Board University



A brand new, online training course helps tree boards and citizen advocates learn more about trees, about people, and about serving in a citizen advisory role in your city, town, or village. Tree Board University contains eight courses that participants take at their own pace. Typically, you'll spend between 2 and 5 hours on each one. After completing one course, you will have access to the next one, but can return to previously completed courses for review, if desired. Each course includes videos, multi-media presentations, reference documents, and online links to additional information. Upon completion of the eight courses, you have the opportunity to join an online social networking community, where you can post questions and interact with other like-minded Tree

Board members from across the USA!

Sign up for this unique, new learning experience by visiting the Tree Board University website: <http://treeboardu.org/>

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URBAN FOREST STEWARDSHIP AWARD



Congratulations to Shirley Dziedzic, current President of the Lacey Historical Society, who was recently recognized with the Urban Forest Stewardship Award by the Washington Community Forestry Council. Thanks to Shirley's dedication, Lacey's Memorial Tree Program remains "alive and thriving" in the City of Lacey.

What began as a Historical Society project developed into a partnership between the Lacey Historical Society and the City of

Lacey—a friendship cultivated and nurtured, thanks in large part to Shirley's efforts.

Since the program began in 1986, trees and shrubs have been planted honoring Lacey citizens on Society and City properties. Shirley was invaluable to the success of the program, inspecting plantings on a regular basis, and informs Society Trustees and City of Lacey staff when pruning or care is needed.

Through her hard work and dedication, she has preserved the history of the people remembered and the plants dedicated to them. All of the dedications are housed in albums that she and members of a committee put together with the aid of Random Acts of Kindness.

Congratulations, Shirley!

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Fruit Tree Tip of the Month



Rake. Rake. Rake. Leaves and fallen fruit contain spores that spread fungal diseases (e.g. scab) and the pupae of apple maggot fly. These pests live in the ground beneath the tree during the winter and emerge to cause damage in the spring. Removing leaves and fallen fruit is the easiest, least expensive, and thus most effective way to cut down on future pests. So get outside one of these days and rake

away. Another idea: sprinkle agricultural lime (not dolomite lime) on the ground beneath the tree to change the pH and discourage scab spores.

This month's tip, courtesy of City Fruit. For more great tips on growing fruit and fruit trees visit their website: <http://cityfruit.org/>

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POOR PLANTING PRACTICES COME HOME TO ROOST



Even before excavation, poor structure is evident.

(Note: Trunk damage above soil may have been caused by a mower or string trimmer.)

A wind storm in June was blamed for the failure of more than a dozen boxelders in an affluent subdivision on the east side of Boise, Idaho. Nearly fifty more of the trees remain, but pose such a threat that they are scheduled for removal. The issue, not surprisingly, is making the news and bringing angst and controversy to the residents.

The wind should not be blamed, according to Boise City Forester Brian Jorgenson and consultant Gerry Bates who inspected the trees. The **real cause** is a checklist of what not to do when planting trees:

- At the time of planting in 1996, Boise's Community Forestry Office required that the trees be removed and replaced with a species approved for street tree planting.
- Politics, however, held sway and the trees were allowed to remain.
- The trees were planted in a layer of topsoil 12 - 14 inches deep that appears to have been spread over a compacted layer of gravel or roadbed and without breaking up the sub-layer sufficiently.



Excavation reveals circling and compressing roots.

- Wire baskets and synthetic twine were left intact causing the roots to circle and girdle (strangle) themselves.
- The trees were planted several inches too deep, exacerbating circling roots and eliminating the development of trunk flare that helps stabilize a tree.

The removed trees will be replaced, but the expense, disappointment, and risk to public safety could have been prevented by simply following good tree planting practices.

Article adapted from [Idaho Community Trees, No. 56, Fall 2010](#) Photos by Brian Jorgenson.

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COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ

By Sarah Foster

One of my roles as Urban & Community Forestry Program Manager is to be the staff to the



Washington Community Forestry Council and to serve as the Secretary. Another 'hat' that I wear is the Outreach Director on the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (PNW-ISA) Board of Directors. I'm taking this opportunity to blend the two together and share information about PNW-ISAs new Outreach Plan.

PNW-ISA is committed to its mission of fostering a greater appreciation of trees and promoting the professional practice of arboriculture through education, research, and technology.



PNW-ISA is recognized for excellence across the nation in our approaches and programs aimed at making our mission a reality. Over the past couple of years we have put significant focus on our education efforts. Our delivery system through the Regional Education Coordinators, our quality of programming, and the commitment of our membership to achieve certifications

and higher skills levels each year has positioned us as a leader in this arena.

While our commitment to education remains, PNW-ISA believes the natural next step is to increase the focus on our outreach efforts. Beyond the inner circle of arborists and PNW-ISA members, how do we want to be known and defined? If we truly believe in our mission, how do we leverage the commitment of our highly skilled membership to reach beyond ourselves? In order to foster a greater appreciation for trees and promote our professional practices, we must move beyond our own membership.

In developing an outreach plan, the PNW-ISA Board of Directors had to first define what we meant by outreach and then determine who we would target with our efforts. The public initially seemed to be a natural target, but we quickly realized that was too broad. After much deliberation, we agreed that the primary target audience for PNW-ISAs outreach efforts would be to our Allied Professionals. Ultimately, by building a solid plan focused on Allied Professionals, we are widening our net with those who communicate directly with the public. Essentially, we're expanding our credible messengers and, as a result, we believe that we will also begin making inroads with the public, especially those who own homes and trees.

In July, 2010, the Board of Directors approved the new outreach plan. If you are interested in receiving a copy, please contact me at (360) 902-1704 or by email at sarah.foster@dnr.wa.gov.

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Community Tree Management Institute



Every other year, the state urban forestry programs from Oregon and Washington sponsor the Community Tree Management Institute, a year-long crash course in urban forestry for city employees who have tree related duties. For 2011 or 2012, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and Washington DNR are considering a new model for the delivery

of this course - whereby a significant portion of the material will be online, and the course will only meet in person once or twice instead of four times throughout the year. If you are interested in this opportunity, please send Paul Ries an email at pries@odf.state.or.us

Introduction to Tree Climbing Class - Spokane

January 15 - March 26 Saturday Noon - 4 pm; Spokane Community College

A 44-hour introduction to tree climbing using rope and saddle. This type of climbing is used by arborists for inspection pruning, repair and sometimes tree removal. No prior climbing experience is required. Note: You must register with the college prior to the first class day.

For additional course information, call Rich Baker, 466-6559, between 8am & 4pm.

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The Washington Urban and Community Forestry Program is made possible with assistance from the [USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program](#).

The program's purpose is to educate citizens and decision-makers about the economic, environmental, psychological, and aesthetic benefits of trees and to assist local governments, citizen groups and volunteers in planting and sustaining healthy trees and vegetation wherever people live and work in Washington State.

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