

Archive for November, 2010

Protect Your Trees From Ice Melters

Wednesday, November 3rd, 2010

Winter's coming on, and icy driveways may be in your future. If you use chemical ice melters to clear away the ice, there are some things you should know to protect any nearby trees or other plants. Almost all ice melting substances are technically salts. Salts can damage plants in two ways:

1. As an airborne mist affecting foliage, buds, and stems.
2. By entering the soil.

Either form of contamination can cause slow growth, deformities, susceptibility to diseases, and even death of the plant. Plants growing in locations which are subject to exposure to deicing chemicals, should be protected by using these preventive methods:

- * Remove ice by mechanical means, if practical.
- * Create drainage channels or barriers around plants where deicers are used.
- * Use only the amount of chemical to do the job. Practice moderation.
- * Use dark colored abrasives as an alternative or supplement to chemicals (sand, wood ash, cinders, etc.).
- * Use calcium chloride rather than sodium chloride-based substances, when available.
- * Apply gypsum if sodium chloride contamination is anticipated.
- * Be especially careful in applying salts in late winter or early spring when the ground is not frozen.

Trees need attention, even in the winter !!!!!

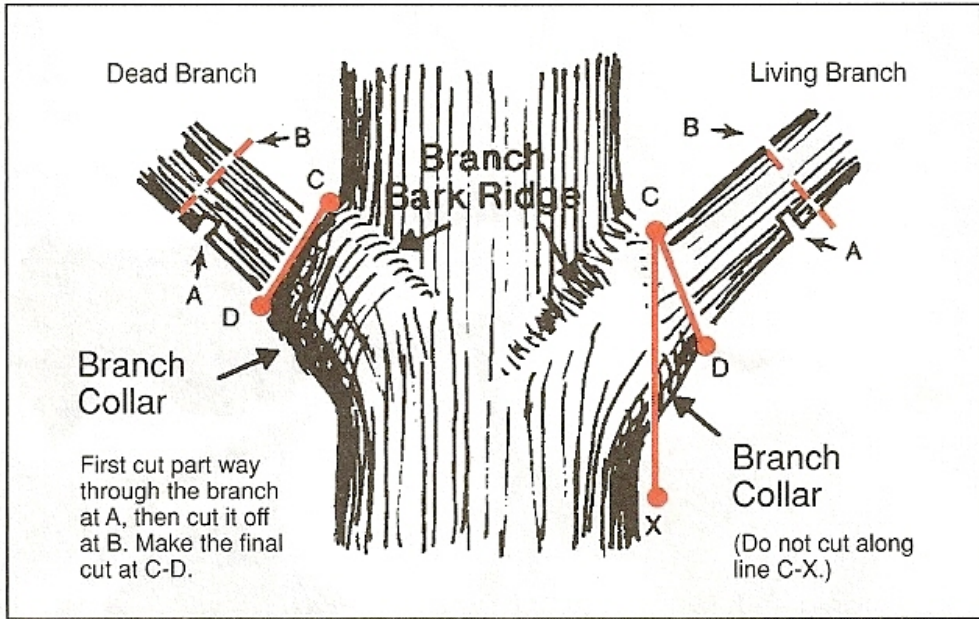
The Adventures of Red Bud Continue

Monday, November 15th, 2010

Well.....the dormant season is upon us, and the saga of Red Bud continues. He (she, it ?) resprouted to about 3 feet tall by the time that dormancy and leaf fall set in. I have coaxed a single stem into being and am anxiously awaiting to see if the coming winter will wreak havoc on this tender shoot. It has seemed to harden off pretty well, however, and set a good terminal bud, so I feel like it will weather the winter weather in good shape. We'll see.

I will still be monitoring the development next year, probably daily, to assure that additional root collar sprouts do not develop. My goal is to encourage a single stem for at least another 2-3 feet before I step back and let it develop into a "normal" vase-like redbud shape. Future pruning will then be directed to keeping the limb weights better balanced than red might do on his own. If all goes well, I hope to have a nice redbud back in my yardscape by mid-summer, with a shape that is less likely to split down the middle. Again, we will see.

I also have some difficult pruning tasks to complete on a couple of crabapples, but I will wait until late winter to do this chore. Crabs tend to develop some errant branches that grow in funny directions, and correcting them, without wrecking the shape they now have – which is pretty good, will take whatever skill I possess.....plus some luck.....actually, lots of luck. Hopefully, I won't have too many problems when I get to this job. Wish me luck.



Whether pruning a live or dead branch, it is important to make the pruning cut just outside the tree's branch bark ridge and branch collar. This facilitates natural sealing that helps the tree defend against decay.

Tree Care After Storms – The Series

Saturday, November 27th, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Snow, ice, tornadoes, hail, and strong winds are just a few of the elements that can damage trees in Missouri. When storms damage trees, cleanup and recovery can be bewildering. Some injured trees can be repaired to maintain their value to you and your home landscape. Others should be removed. Over the next several entries, I'll try to provide advice that will help you make the right decisions for your trees.

SAFETY FIRST

Damaged trees often are tangled with overhead utility lines. Under no circumstances should a homeowner try to remove limbs that are entangled with electrical lines. Treat all lines as if they were live; do not touch or approach them. Contact the utility company immediately and ask them to deal with this problem.

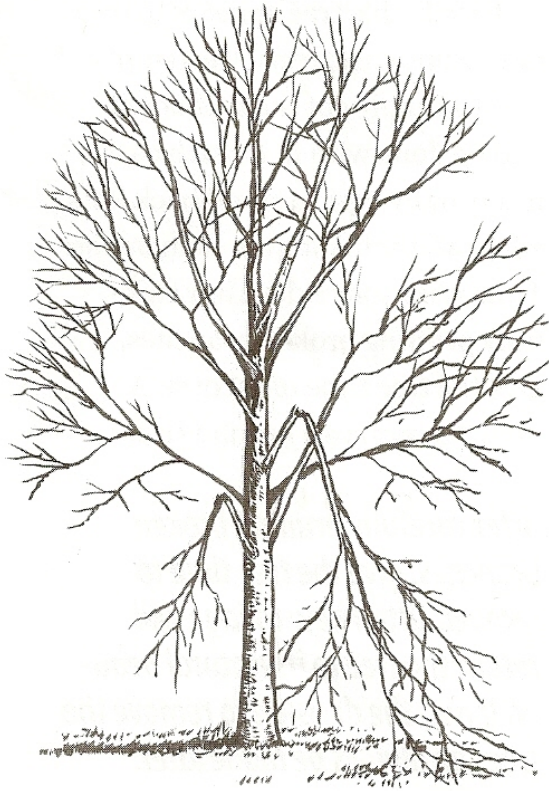
They are trained to remove limbs and/or prune trees entangled with wires, and want to do so as soon as possible in order to get the power restored to damaged neighborhoods.

If there is no danger from electrical lines, the first step is to remove limbs or debris that have fallen on your house or are blocking access. Also check for hanging limbs that could fall on your home or family members. Any remaining tree damage can wait until the immediate crisis has passed. As long as there is no safety risk, **take your time, to assess the damage and make decisions on which trees to try and save and which ones to remove.**

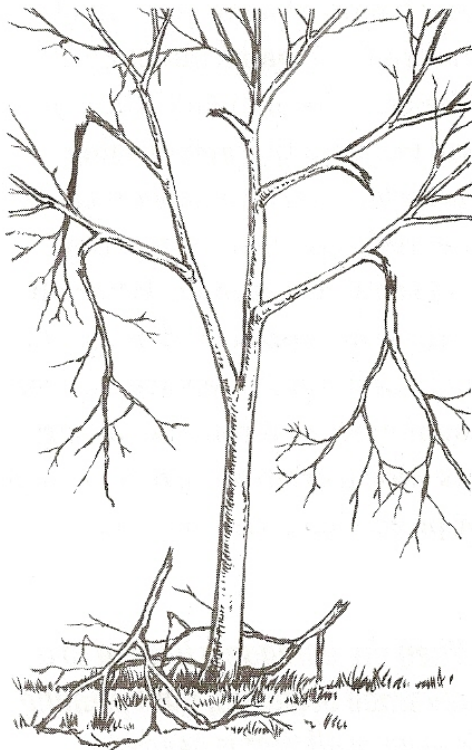
In all but life threatening situations, you may want to **check your homeowners insurance before any tree work is performed.** Many policies will cover at least part of tree removal costs if some structural damage has occurred.

Small sized tree debris on the ground can usually be cleaned up by most homeowners. Unless you are familiar with the safe handling of chain saws and climbing equipment, and are physically fit for strenuous physical labor, major tree repair and cleanup should be left to professional arborists.

NEXT TIME: CAN THE TREE BE SAVED ?



When the damage is limited to a few small branches, light pruning is usually all that is needed.



After carefully pruning broken branches, give the tree time to recover. Often new foliage will return the tree to its natural beauty. If not, the decision to remove the tree can always be made later.