

Archive for June, 2011

Red Bud Update

Sunday, June 5th, 2011

Well, it looks like my friend “Red Bud” might make it after all. He (she, it....?) is currently 4.25 feet tall and growing. A single stem is still prevalent, but the tree is trying to develop into a typical, open grown, vase-shaped specimen, and that was his previous downfall once the crown developed into a wide vase shape (the limbs got too heavy and the trunk split down to ground level). So, if I don’t want that to happen again, I will have to closely watch the development over the next few weeks, and do some judicious corrective pruning; hopefully not so much that I slow down the vigorous growth that Ol’ Red is making right now.

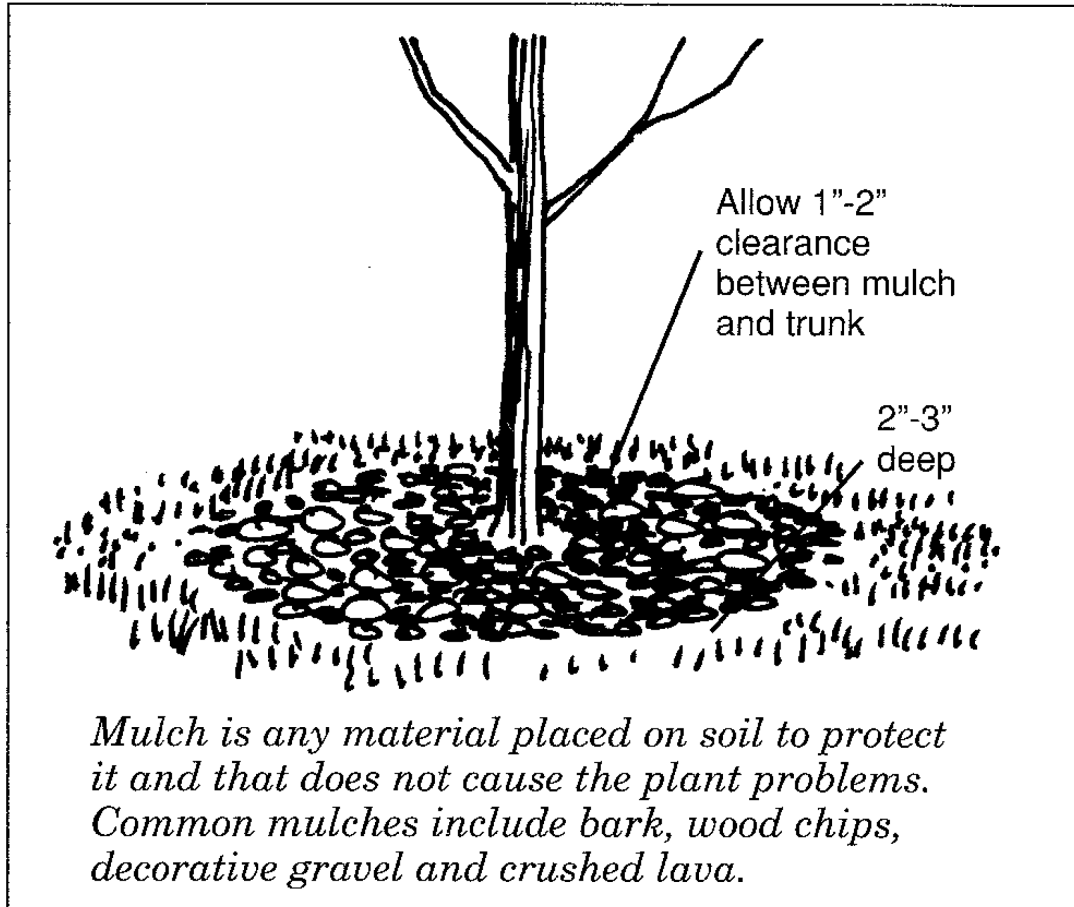
I have kept the root collar sprouts under control, and I think they will soon begin to fade from the scene, and all the growth energy will be invested in the single stem that seems to be developing satisfactorily. At least that is the plan. I should continue to get good growth until the summer doldrums set-in about July one. However, it is starting to get dry and hot already so Red may give it a rest until these early dog day-like conditions ease up a bit. It already seems like mid-July around here rather than early June, so we’ll just have to wait and see what ensues.

Stay tuned.

How Mulch Do You Love Your Newly Planted Tree?

Monday, June 13th, 2011

Mulch is a young trees best friend. It holds down competing weeds or grass, retains soil moisture, prevents soil cracking that can damage new roots, protects the trunk from lawnmower damage, and helps prevent soil compaction. Organic mulches such as wood chips, bark, or pine needles also contribute to better soil structure and aeration as they decompose. Properly mulching around your trees proves that you really care about them.



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To properly mulch: cover smoothed soil with three inches of wood or bark chips. Pine needles are OK too, as noted above. Decorative gravel or crushed lava rock may also be used, but avoid using limestone gravel as it will unduly raise the soil pH above what is good for tree growth. The organic mulches are preferred. Spread the mulch into a donut shape about 2-3 feet in diameter, taking care to leave a 1-2" gap around the trunk. Do not mound mulch onto the trunk, as this mounding encourages root girdling, which can weaken and kill the tree. Black plastic, grass clippings, or sawdust should not be used as mulch. Keep mulch weeded, and replace as needed.

As Martha herself might say, "mulch – it's a good thing."

Trees For Joplin

Sunday, June 26th, 2011

The terrible tornado that struck the Joplin, Mo. area on May 22 devastated a large part of that city, plus a large part of the nearby suburbs, including the small town of Duquesne. Loss of lives (over 150), homes, businesses, infrastructure (a major regional hospital, schools, etc.), and many injuries to residents and

visitors, made this event one of the most destructive single tornadoes ever recorded in the United States. I'm sure most folks have heard about the details, so I won't elaborate any further.

Most of the hardest hit neighborhoods were in an older part of town, which contained many, many larger-sized trees. Practically all the trees are gone, and most all of the survivors are damaged so badly that they will have to be removed. Obviously, tree restoration will be a large project after the neighborhoods are reestablished. There's a big planting job ahead.

Fortunately, there is time to get ready for the tree restoration work, since there is no need to start planting right away. Next spring (maybe some this fall) will be a more desirable time to start than this summer (obviously). In order to facilitate the planning and action for the job, efforts are underway to line-up resources for the work. One of the ways you can help is to donate money to the Community Foundation of the Ozarks at: www.cfozarks.org/donate. Look for the program, "Trees For Joplin." Donations can be made online, and you can read about the Foundation on their website. They have done great things in Ozark communities, and are a respected organization in the region.

Another place to donate is to Forest Releaf of Missouri. Forest Releaf is based in St. Louis, but works statewide to foster better care of trees across our "Wide Missouri." You can contact them at www.moreleaf.org. They have several programs that provide trees for planting, and your gift can be targeted for Joplin releaf.

I recently sent some money. How about you?