

Archive for May, 2011

Spring!

Friday, May 6th, 2011

Well.....I experienced my first hard disc crash, right in the middle of turkey hunting season. So, I have been out of service until now. I had to acquire and configure a new computer, but I think I am back in business. If you missed me, that's the reason why. I'm my own tech support most of the time, and it took me a while to get back up and running. I hope you were out planting trees while I was diddling with the new hardware. It was doubly trying because the first machine Staples sold me didn't work and I had to return it for another. Very unusual, but it happens about 5 out of every 100 new machines according to the Staples techie. Of course, it was replaced at no charge.

Fortunately, I had most of my critical files backed up on an external hard drive, and even had some of the same files backed up on data cds and flash drives. I only lost a few items (non-critical) that I hadn't sent to the undisclosed location(s) yet. If you compute, and don't back up your stuff, you better start doing it **RIGHT NOW! Nuff said?**

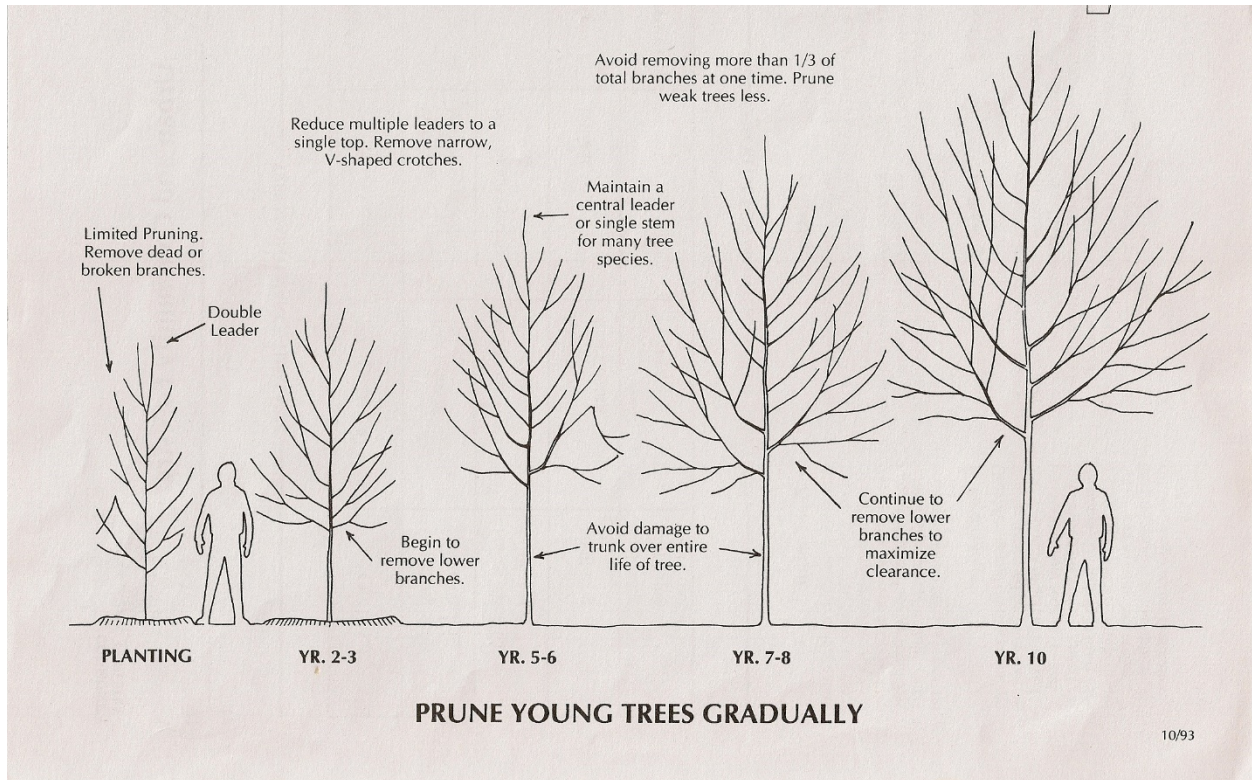
Red Bud is rising – but not as quickly as I envisioned. I have a single stem developing, but he has only grown about 6" so far, Leaf production is also slow, but he lives on.....for now. I still think he'll pull through, but I probably won't know for sure until the end of June. The cold wet spring may have something to do with Red's slow awakening, but I'm sure much of the 8 year old root system is dead, or non-functional, so Ol Red is working with a new root system just as a newly planted seedling would be doing. That's basically what he looks like; i.e. a freshly planted seedling

I'll try to keep you posted.

Pruning After Planting

Monday, May 16th, 2011

Normally, there is no need to start pruning a freshly planted tree. In fact, the more top growth you can keep on a new addition to your home landscape, the better. A good volume of leaf surface promotes better early growth and root establishment. Even if the new tree doesn't have the most desirable form, it is usually better to let the top produce and defer any corrective pruning for a year or so. This assures that the tree will be strong enough to endure the required pruning cuts with few ill effects. Presented below is a schematic drawing indicating the general schedule for pruning young trees.



The Bugs Are Coming, The Bugs Are Coming !!!!!!!

Sunday, May 22nd, 2011

.....And the fungi, and viruses, and all sorts of pestilence that love to dine on and infect the lush foliage that most trees are producing this year due to the wet spring over much of Missouri and the upper midwest. Thirteen year cicadas are set to hatch in many locations. If you had a bad case of bagworms last year, get ready to start spraying about June 1 if you want to head off the damage these pesky insects can do. Contact your local nursery or garden center for specific recommendations to control bagworms, or get ready to pick them by hand. I had a bad case on an arborvitae last year, so I've got my sprayer and malathion ready to go, whenever it dries up for more than one day. I don't want it to wash away before the little worms can get a dose down their gullets

Speaking of cicadas, there is not much you can do about these critters since there will be so many of them. If you can stand the noise, you can go out and pick them off of any young trees that you want to protect from the twig damage that they do when they lay eggs. In general, healthy trees of all sizes will be able to weather the storm, with only minimum damage expected to limbs and twigs. The trees should have enough time to recover from any damage before fall dormancy sets in.

There are a number of other pests to watch for this year, many of which won't cause much heartburn for you, or serious damage to your trees. However, a good idea is to keep yourself plugged into the local tree care situation so you can take prompt action when something serious starts to show up. Your friendly garden center or nursery will know about the current situation and probably won't mind a potential customer checking in occasionally to see what pests are making an appearance in the neighborhood. Watch for news releases from various organizations such as MDC, and the Mo. Dept of Agriculture. A

call to the entomologists and pathologists engaged by these state agencies can provide a valuable head's up in just a few minutes. Another source of information is the local University of Mo. Extension office.

Preventing damage from pests is an important aspect of proper tree care around the homestead; especially at this time of year. The spring growth flush is producing plenty of good eats, and there is probably something out there looking for a good meal. You'll probably have to sacrifice some of the largess produced by your plants, because you can't kill every pest that may come grocery shopping. The objective is to keep the damage within a level that will not harm the ability of your tree(s) to overcome the attacks and tack on some good growth before fall dormancy.