

# Sperry Tree Care

NEWSLETTER

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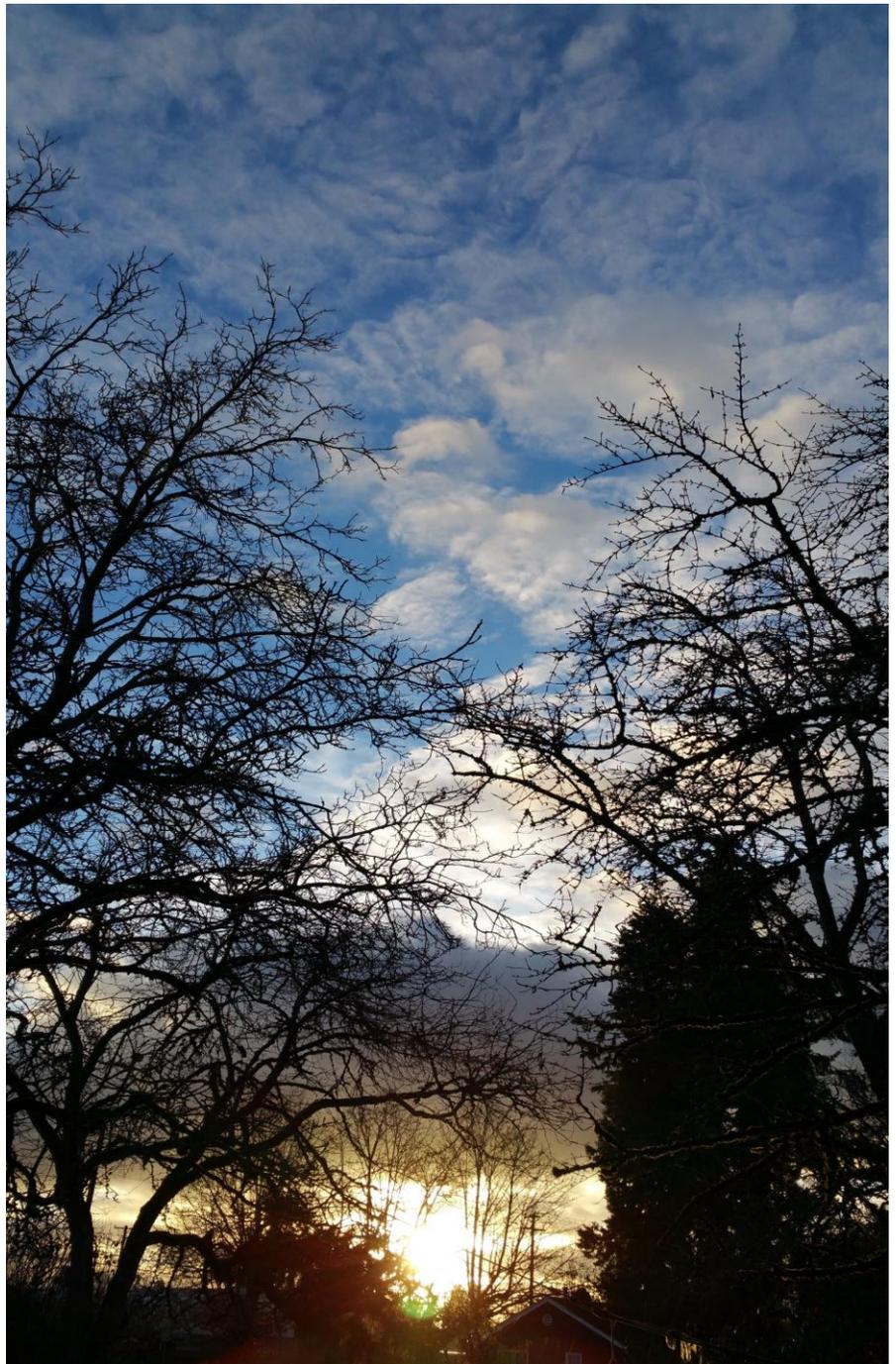
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Leaf It to Us



Winter  
2022

### WELCOME TO OUR WINTER NEWSLETTER!

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The holiday's have come and gone, but winter remains. Just as we long to curl up under a warm blanket and read a good book or binge-watch our favorite show, our trees and plants are also taking a break. They are using this time to prepare for the busy growing season ahead. We can help you prepare as well. In this edition you'll learn what you should do following a storm, how defensible space can protect your home from wildfire and how you can convert the leaves from your trees into a natural soil amendment that benefits your entire yard for free while saving you from the annual chore of leaf clean-up.

# Winter Tasks



## FOLLOWING A STORM

It is important to remember that trees sometimes still come down after a storm event is over. Extreme caution is always advised. Stay clear of any trees that are now leaning and remember that a tree that is still standing straight may have broken or loose branches. It's important to address clear damage while being aware that impending threats might not be obvious to the untrained eye. When assessing damage, don't forget to look up! Broken branches up above can suddenly drop without warning.

Once you know what you're dealing with you can determine the best course of action. If you have concerns about a power line, contact the electric company. If it's an issue with a tree, you're likely going to need the help of an experienced arborist and tree care company. Storms can generate a lot of calls to our office. No need to wait on hold or leave a message. You can request an appointment on our website! This is the fastest way to secure an appointment.

Newsletter  
Subscriber  
Savings

**SPERRY TREE CARE CO.**

**10% OFF**

10% off tree pruning accepted by March. 31, 2022.  
May not be combined with other offers. Code: TREE22



## DEFENSIBLE SPACE

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What is defensible space? It's a buffer that you create around your home to improve its chance of surviving a wildfire. Minimizing the number and size of trees and shrubs between your home and the wildland that surrounds it can slow the spread of a wildfire and prevent direct flame or embers from making contact with structures. The removal of dead and dying vegetation along with branches that are in close proximity to structures will help to protect against both spreading embers and radiant heat.

Creating vertical space is also important. It is recommended that tree branches be removed at least 6 ft from the base to prevent fire from moving from the ground to the tree tops. Proper spacing between shrubs and trees should also be considered as shrubs can act as a ladder for flames, helping them make the transition from the ground to the tree canopy.

Now is the time to take action to mitigate the risks associated with fire. Once fire season arrives, the Oregon Department of Forestry imposes restrictions on the use power equipment such as chainsaws and chippers that are routinely used in tree care. Areas with a high fire risk are the first to have these restrictions imposed, so planning well in advance is imperative.



Our team of ISA Certified Arborists can meet with you to assess your property risk and develop a plan for creating defensible space to lower your risks in the event of wildfire.

For more information on reducing wildfire risks, visit [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).

# Tree in the Spotlight



It can take up to 7 years for persimmon to bear fruit.

## AMERICAN PERSIMMON (DIOSPYROS VIRGINIANA) ORIENTAL PERSIMMON (DIOSPYROS KAKI)

There are two primary types of Persimmon trees:

**American Persimmon** are native to the Eastern US and have small fruit.

**Oriental Persimmon** are native to China, have larger fruit and are commercially available. They come in astringent and non-astringent varieties. Astringent varieties are inedible when firm but are generally sweeter once the fruit has ripened. Non-astringent persimmons can be eaten while either firm or soft, but will be less sweet than their counterparts.

### Pros:

- Edible fruit
- Attractive, fall color

### Cons:

- Nursery stock expensive
- High nursery mortality rate
- Heavy fruit bearing
- Requires thinning fruit or branch propping

# Leaf It to Us

## NATURAL SOIL AMENDMENT

Have you ever thought of not raking your leaves and see what happens during the Winter? If you pay attention, the leaves will quickly start their process of decomposition and inevitably break down to be pulled into the ground by worms and insects that count on that litter for food and shelter. Even the leaves left on lawn will disappear – even faster if you run your mower over them to be shredded.

Urban landscapes are very often sterilized by the application of synthetic fertilizers and other pesticides designed to help the plants and trees. In reality, that need to make the landscape “look good” leads to an erroneous idea of health. The lawn is green and lush, the plants and trees seem to grow and survive but the soil, the principal foundation of health for anything that grows is mostly sterile. The synthetic fertilizers are the equivalent of food given to a starving organism while the environment around is bleak and lifeless. By pushing the imagination, a plant like a rhododendron for example could survive in a container of sand so long as a regular injection of food (fertilizer) is applied with water. There is hardly anything organic in the sand but by providing the necessary food and water, the plant survives... but it doesn't thrive.



In comparison, undisturbed soils like the ones seen in forests are extremely alive. Years of litter left to decompose create an amazing environment for the insects, worms, fungi and a vast microbiology that transform the litter into nutrients that will be taken in by the feeder roots of the trees and plants.

Another important aspect of the soil seen in the forest is its porosity. A constant composting is happening right under our feet by all the organisms responsible for breaking down the organic litter so a humus is created allowing the water to penetrate easily, oxygen to keep the soil “alive” and feeder roots to travel easily in search of nutrients.

Soils become compacted easily even by simple foot traffic, especially if the cushy leaf litter is systematically removed. The common reaction is to add bark-o-mulch to cover the soil when the leaves are removed but even if the layer of mulch provides some protection from compaction, it is very poor in nutrients. Some of us live in neighborhoods regulated by Home Owner Association rules that are usually much less tolerant of leaves left on lawns. Just let the lawnmower bag the leaves and they will be automatically shredded then all you have to do is spread the content in the flower beds or around the base of your trees (without piling against the trunk). Heck, you can even cover it with bark-o-mulch if it needs to look very clean and up to the HOA Standards.

Finally, if the soil is really compacted and the plants and trees seem to suffer from it, there is a way to help via a process called verti-mulching which is the incorporation of compost or organic matter into the soil by drilling holes with a small auger then filling the holes. If the compost has been spread on the ground prior to the drilling, it will be incorporated as the holes are being drilled. That operation has a two-prong advantage: inoculating poor soil with organic matter and aerating the ground. Slowly, the microbiology of the organic matter will colonize the soil and slowly improve it over time.

The auger can be invasive and such an operation should require locating for utilities so another way to help without running the risk of hitting roots or utilities is using a pneumatic “air knife” called Airspade®. Imagine an air wand connected to a compressor that will blast air through a 1” wide opening. The tip is inserted in the ground and the air fractures the compacted particles of the soil to allow more oxygen to penetrate. If, like with the verti-mulching, compost has been spread on the surface, it will be pushed down and spread below grade even easier therefore accelerating the recovery of your soil. Our company owns an Airspade® which we have used in numerous occasions to improve soil compaction with amazing results.

In short, restoring a healthy environment for your plants and trees is an easy start. You have the right to a “lazy streak” and leave the leaves where they lay but if you really feel like raking, rake them into your flower beds, you’ll be surprised by the results. You should remove them from the sidewalk and street gutter at least to avoid tripping and slipping risks and allow proper drainage along the street.

We offer FREE estimate consultation appointments.  
Call our office or request an appointment online at [sperrytreecare.com](http://sperrytreecare.com).



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