

the Grassette

TERRE VISTA LLC

Merry Christmas



What a year, this season without a doubt has been one of my most enjoyable in my 22 years. The equipment held up reasonably well and my crew was top notch, not to mention all of you who make it possible. To tell you the truth I find all this a little ironic as for the first time I was a little nervous going into this season I had never witnessed an economy such as this and I had expected a few losses. Half way through the season I was talking with a four friends of mine in the business and almost all of them had a downturn in business; one friend was down over 35%. I almost felt guilty to realize that I was almost 5% up for the year. I just blamed it on all of you, my phone rang constantly this season with all our customers adding on extra work, so from the bottom of my heart I say "thank you," for making 2009 a great year.

Once again, there will not be a price increase for the upcoming 2010 season, Merry Christmas.

While I love the holidays I could not wait to get back to work after the Thanksgiving Holiday. Do not get me wrong I absolutely love my family and I enjoy my time off. Unlike last year where only my wife, I and my daughters were in attendance, Kolby was in Kentucky at a

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basketball tournament. This year we had my father-in-law, his wife; Kolby and his girlfriend, several cousins and a pair aunts and uncles, twelve people in all. I was in charge of the meal, which is the case when it is held at my house, you see, my wife hates to cook and I love to. To pull it off I have to use the organizations skills that I have picked up during my twenty-two years of running a lawn care business. On the Friday following Thanksgiving we had a little family party for all the relatives that were in town. We had family in from Arkansas, Arizona, and Colorado, forty-five in total and again the whole thing was at our house, not that I am complaining, I am just setting the table for my story. Oh, and did I mention that I had to get up at 5:30am on Saturday morning to drive to Norman, Oklahoma to watch my 6-5 Sooners with and 11:30am kick-off, I realize that what ever sympathy I garnered from most of you I lost with my last statement. Let me tell you that when your team is 6 and 5 it is hard to get in the car and drive anywhere to watch them play, not really, because it is my Sooners 6-5 or 11-0.

Anyway my Thanksgiving week started with a late night shopping spree to Sam's to get my supplies. Luckily I did not have to buy a turkey this year as my daughter Alex received a frozen turkey for her birthday from one of her friends at school. I have to

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say that this has to be one of the most unusual gifts I have ever heard of getting on your eighteenth birthday, but oh well to say the least it was very practical. On the turkey note, this year I decided to try something and new and made a brine for the turkey. It was easy and it gave the turkey much flavor and made it extremely moist, I plan on taking this approach from now on.

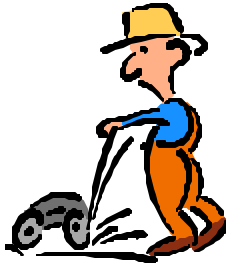
Anyway, when I got back from Sam's Tuesday night I had to make two soups for our out-of-town guests that would be arriving Wednesday evening and since I planned on working all day Wednesday I was in a time crunch to get everything done and because everyone was here I stayed up well past my usual bedtime of 10p.m. Basically over the four day week-end I was in charge of preparing three breakfasts, three lunches, a Thanksgiving meal for twelve and a party for forty-five out of a total of thirty-two hours of sleep I managed to get about sixteen, by Sunday afternoon after everyone had left I found myself on the couch for a much deserved nap. So that is why I was looking forward to get back to work so that I would have a little time to relax. The question was posed would I do it again and I must say absolutely.





December To Do's

1. Pick out poinsettia and Christmas cactus early.
2. Check your bird feeders.
3. Keep Christmas tree watered.
4. Cut back hardy mums to 3" and mulch well.
5. Mulch roses after ground has frozen.
6. Thoroughly water lawn, trees & shrubs before putting away hoses.
7. Do not water if ground is frozen.
8. Decide on the changes you need to make in your garden and start to plan them on paper.



Turf's Up

We will be applying the fourth and final round of fertilizer for this season soon I am waiting until we get the leaves picked up before we apply the final round. Water is not at all necessary with this application, as I like to wait there until nature takes its course. This application is important as it helps the root system get ready for a long winter's nap and it is important for greening up your lawn come next spring.

Right now we are in the midst of fall clean-ups which we started the last week of November and they should carry through to Christmas. (weather

permitting) We have over 60 names on that list so it will take us a while to get through it, some days we can only get about 5-6 lawns completed it always varies as to the amount of leaves. So please be patient and we will get to you as soon as possible. We have almost finished the west side except for a few properties with some stubborn oaks to which the leaves just will not fall and we are well into the eastside schedule.

This is the first time in my 22 year career that we were able to mow actual grass in November and we actually got three mowings in for a few of you.

Frost on Lawns

This is a question that I get all the time this time of the year. If you have ever walked across a frosted lawn that isn't dormant, you may have noticed your footprints showing up later in the day. Though this is unsightly, it **does not** kill the turf. Grass blades are damaged but the crown is not. Actively growing turf



will often recover after two to four mowings. Damage that occurs late in the fall will continue to show damage until it is masked by the rest of the lawn turning brown due to cold weather. It is believed that the damage is caused by ice crystals killing plant cells when they are forced into the leaf by the weight of a wheel or foot. Remember to avoid damage by staying off of frosted turf. Also, even damaged turf is not killed and will eventually recover.

Poinsettia Care

Modern poinsettia varieties stay attractive for a long time if given proper care. Place your poinsettia in a sunny window or the brightest area of the room, but don't let it touch cold windowpanes. The day temperature should be 65 to 75 degrees F. with 60 to 65 degrees at night. Temperatures above 75 degrees will shorten bloom life, and below 60 degrees may cause root rot. Move plants away from windows at night or draw drapes between them to avoid damage from the cold. Poinsettias are somewhat finicky in regard to soil moisture. Avoid overwatering because poinsettias do not like "wet feet." On the other



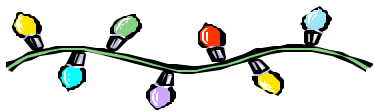
hand, if the plant is allowed to wilt, it will drop some leaves. So how do you maintain proper moisture? Examine the potting soil daily by sticking your finger about one inch deep into the soil. If it is dry to this depth, the plant needs water. When it becomes dry to the touch, water the plant with lukewarm water until some water runs out of the drainage hole, then discard the drainage water.

Laughter is the best medicine



Sometimes when things are so bad the best thing is to step back and just laugh, I found this on the web and it made me chuckle for a few.

1. The economy is so bad that I got a pre-declined credit card in the mail.
2. The economy is so bad I ordered a burger at McDonalds and the kid behind the counter asked, "Can you afford fries with that?"
3. The economy is so bad that CEO's are now playing miniature golf.
4. The economy is so bad if the bank returns your check marked "Insufficient Funds," you call them and ask if they meant you or them.
5. The economy is so bad Hot Wheels and Matchbox stocks are trading higher than GM.
6. The economy is so bad McDonalds is selling the 1/4 ounce.
7. The economy is so bad parents in Beverly Hills fired their nannies and learned their children's names.
8. The economy is so bad a truckload of Americans was caught sneaking into Mexico.
9. The economy is so bad Motel Six won't leave the light on anymore.
10. The economy is so bad Exxon-Mobil laid off 25 Congressmen



Eastern Red Cedar Problems

By Megan Kennelly-KSU

Unexpectedly high mortality of Eastern Red Cedar has been observed this spring and summer across parts of Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, and Kansas. The underlying cause has been difficult to pin down, but these state summaries reveal some common features. Missouri: Initial field visits showed that some trees in Columbia and Piedmont, Mo., were infected with *Heterobasidion annosum*. In areas with annosum root rot, the disease appeared to follow a typical root disease pattern with an identifiable "center" and damage spreading outward. Visits to the Kansas City and Kirksville, Mo. areas, showed no sign of root disease, and attempts to consistently isolate pathogenic fungi from affected trees proved inconclusive. Most eastern red cedar mortality reports from northern and western Missouri have been from the Kansas City and St. Joseph areas. The typical symptom was a relatively healthy tree that turned olive green and then completely brown within two weeks. Basal cankers, collar rots, or root rots were not observed on most trees. Trees tended to be randomly distributed. Affected windbreak trees seemed to be growing in soil similar in structure, aspect, drainage, and compaction to that of healthy trees. In general, mortality did not appear to be spreading to neighboring trees. Most affected cedars have been fairly young (5 to 20 years old) in both planted windbreaks and natural stands. A relatively low percentage of trees are actually affected in most property situations (i.e., less than 1 percent), but some properties have higher mortality rates (i.e., up to 5 percent). Most trees died early this spring, but red cedars are still dying, according to reports from north-central Missouri. The only consistency found in affected trees was the presence of extremely high numbers of bark beetles. Bark beetle infestations may be the eventual cause of death, but something else is suspected to have caused them to attack apparently healthy trees.

The abrupt mortality, widespread distribution of the mortality throughout the state, and the fact that the declining trees did not have one pathogen uniformly found on the declining trees indicates that other factors may be involved. Most of the trees sampled had evidence of bark beetle activity. Typically bark beetles are considered a secondary pest on junipers, but all of the affected trees had some bark beetle activity. The damage seems sporadic, with only a few trees affected in a windbreak planting. Iowa plans to continue looking into the problem and will begin scouring roots and other plant tissues to detect signs of nematodes. Nematodes have not been identified at this time.

Conclusion and Recommendations: Some cedars are being killed by annosum root rot, but a common cause of death appears to be bark beetle attacks following other stressors. If no other damaging agents are determined, the mortality may be a result of the various fungal diseases thriving during this cool moist spring, along with bark beetle attack. Pathologists will continue to follow the problem, keeping in mind that the mortality could be a result of the unusual weather events and that the problem may subside once "normal" weather returns. The current management recommendation is to remove and completely destroy dead and dying junipers. Trees that are already heavily infested with bark beetles will not recover, and sanitation will reduce emerging beetle populations, as well as destroying the fungal pathogens that may be present on the foliage.

Christmas Recipes

In our hustle bustle lives here are a few of my wife's favorite on the go Christmas ideas. Every year we load these goodies into cellophane bags tie them up with ribbon and give them away to friends. They are all very easy recipes and they are all crowd pleasers and the best thing is they are 100% foolproof, now a few years ago I made that statement not realizing that micro-wave ovens very greatly and it got me into trouble with a few of you.

Crock Pot Candy

2 lbs. white almond bark; 1 bar (4oz. German chocolate); 1 pkg. (12 oz) semisweet chocolate chips; 1 jar (24oz) dry roasted peanuts.

Place all ingredients in a crock-pot on high: cook 1 hour on high. Do not stir. Turn crock-pot to low and stir every 15 minutes for 1 hour. Drop on waxed paper and cool. Store in an airtight container.

Rolo Pretzels

Favorite pretzel shape; 1 pkg. Rolo candies (round candies filled with caramel made by Hershey); 1 pkg. pecan halves

Set oven for 250 degrees. Lay out pretzels on a large cookie sheet with aluminum foil between cookie sheet and pretzels. Place 1 candy in the middle of each pretzel and bake for approximately 4 minutes. While they are still warm place pecan halve on each candy and press down.

Saltine Cracker Toffee

Line lipped cookie sheet w/ saltine crackers. Boil 1 cup butter with 1cup brown sugar for 3 minutes. Pour over saltines and spread evenly. Bake for 5 minutes at 400 degrees. After the 5 minutes have passed take out of oven and immediately pour 2 cups chocolate chips on top. Wait about five minutes and then use a knife and spread the melted chocolate evenly.

Have a very Merry
Christmas and a safe
and prosperous 2010

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