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CUSTOM TREE TIMES

SPRING 2007

SERVICES

Tree Pruning

Tree Removal

Stump Grinding

Tree Planting

Firewood Sales

Emergency Service

We employ certified arborists by ISA & KAA

Licensed & Insured

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Construction Damage on Trees

These trees have suffered root damage from compaction and trenching close to their trunks, and will unfortunately decline in the years to come.

Spring is finally upon us, and with the warmer weather, activities outdoors will be picking up. But that activity also means many construction projects will be changing the landscape, from installing sprinkler systems to major road construction projects. Construction poses many threats to trees. The obvious damage is usually seen as broken limbs, or damage to the trunk and bark of the tree. However, major effects of construction on trees is usually unseen in the trees' root system. Over time, the effects on the roots will be seen as the trees' crown begins to decline.

Heavy equipment, and grade changes compact the soil around the tree, thereby smothering the root system, which can extend much further than the canopy of the tree. Trees, especially after undergoing the stress of construction, require adequate, but not excessive supply of water to the roots. Proper irrigation can help the tree recover. Applying organic mulch, such as wood chips, may also help the tree. Remember, never mulch deeper than four inches, and do not pile mulch against the trunk of the tree. Mulch should extend as far from the tree as feasible for the landscape.

Pruning should be limited to hazard reduction for the first year after construction damage as it may stress the tree further to reduce the trees' food making capability. Trees should never be topped. Fertilization can stimulate top growth at the expense of root growth. Fertilization should be based on the nutritional needs of the tree. Soil tests can be done to find which nutrients are deficient. Another common mistake is wound dressing. Research shows dressing the wound usually doesn't reduce decay or speed closure and rarely prevents infestations of disease or insects. Many dressing will actually trap moisture, thereby speeding decay. Never fill a cavity with concrete.

While it is our goal to save trees, sadly some won't recover from construction damage. Trees that have sustained damage should be monitored for safety. Obvious signs to watch for include cracks, splits, broken branches, and dead limbs. Usually construction damage leads to a slow decline of the trees possibly over a period of several years. Signs of decline can include smaller or fewer leaves and dieback from the top of the trees or ends of branches. Also watch for signs of internal decay such as cavities or mushroom like fungus growing on the trunk, root flare, large limbs, and roots. If you have a tree that you feel may be a hazard please call us as soon as possible for an evaluation.