

# Branching Out

## 2003

AT SHADY LANE

OUR PHILOSOPHY

IS TO TREAT

NATURE WITH

A RESPECTFUL

AND HOLISTIC

APPROACH. OUR

COMMITMENT

TO YOU IS TO

PROVIDE

KNOWLEDGEABLE,

THOROUGH AND

PROFESSIONAL

SERVICE.

This winter, for the first time, Judy and I took an extended vacation. Our two months away took six months to plan, but it was worth all the time and effort. The emails and calls from home regarding the weather, "the worst winter weather in history" as several stated, was unimaginable in Costa Rica. However, upon returning, Toronto appeared sunny, but looks certainly can be deceiving, it was extremely cold and windy.

Despite the difficulties, staff were kept busy with spring cleaning and Arborist reports. Pruning was done with great resolve on days when the weather conditions were somewhat improved, as the harsh elements continued to break records for the season. The trucks were given a bold new look with our green and cream colours, along with the leaf logo. It is certainly a pleasure to know that one can rely on the home team despite the extreme weather conditions.

We welcome a new staff member to our team. Linda Hawkins joins us as our Plant Monitor/IPM Supervisor. One of Linda's goals is to work with trees to benefit the

environment and to promote and raise awareness of the urban forest.

Her energy and dedication will enable her to establish a long term commitment with Shady Lane and our clients. Read more about Linda in the forth page under Staff Profile.

We continue to strive to improve the service to our clients. This year, a short questionnaire will be included with the invoice mailed. It is our intention to gather as much feedback as possible from clients to facilitate any changes that may be required. We greatly appreciated and thank you in advance for taking the time to fill in the form and return it with the payment.

It is my opinion that the major challenge facing the green industry today is the reduction/ban of chemicals. It appears that new regulations will be forthcoming as the public and advocacy groups press politicians for change. It is

my belief that Shady Lane is well positioned to meet this challenge as we have been providing alternatives for many years.

I look forward to the upcoming season and meeting with you.

Sincerely,



Lewis Arnold

President



# ANGIE'S GARDEN

As I ring the doorbell at the Smith's residence, I note the diversity and amount of plant material in the landscape of the front yard.

Angie joins me in the inspection of the trees and shrubs on her property. She states that she has been aware that her garden needed some TLC. Recently, she approached a good friend whose garden she had often admired. Her friend recommended Shady Lane as she has been using our services for years.

Angie's first concern is the Birch tree which looks unsightly with a dead top. I inform Angie that this is the result of bronze birch bore, an insect known to attack stressed trees. We discuss the need for pruning the dead wood, deep fertilizing to improve vigour, and the implementation of a watering program to help this tree regain full health. Angie is curious to know why the flowering shrubs by the front door have not produced flowers this year. The shrubs have been clipped which removes the flowering bud. The correct procedure is to prune after flowering to enhance the natural shape and encourage new flower. A 25 foot Austrian Pine is showing signs of dead tips and the side facing the street is turning brown. Inspection reveals that the tree is beginning to develop diplodia tip blight and is suffering from winter burn. Diplodia tip blight is a disease that attacks trees in a weakened state; therefore, I recommend that deep root fertilization and a watering

program be implemented. I explain to Angie that it would be beneficial to have the dead tips, and the dead and diseased wood in the tree removed. As well, all fallen needles, cones and debris should be collected in the fall and disposed to prevent the spores from over-wintering on the site. A layer of mulch should be placed under the canopy to help the soil retain moisture.

As we move to the backyard, a golden Schnauzer, Kip joins us for a romp. The Magnolia at the side of the house has given the Smith's considerable trouble for a few years. Although they have applied dormant oil to the tree in the spring, scale remains prevalent and persistent. I explain to Angie that the growing environment has changed over the years; the neighbour's two Norway Maple trees have become the dominant trees on that side of the garden. This has restricted the sunlight and air available to the Magnolia, resulting in the tree trying to grow in an undesirable location. It is my recommendation to remove the Magnolia and replace it with a shade tolerant flowering tree or shrub.

At this time, Kip takes a run towards a large 60 foot Sugar Maple located on the other side of the yard. Angie is concerned about the possibility of losing this tree; she explains that a renovation to the house was completed five years ago. Last year, the tree lost its leaves much earlier than other maples in the area. On inspection, I noticed that the soil system is compacted

and there is a fair amount of dead wood in the crown. I recommend soil analysis followed by root zone aeration, with deep root fertilization and the implementation of a watering program. The crown requires pruning to remove deadwood. Angie and I agree that this tree will have to be monitored for health and vigour.

Along the east side of the addition, the climbing euonymus planted last season are starting to climb the wall. Close inspection shows that some euonymus scale is developing which requires an application of fall dormant oil. The remainder of the landscape appears to be in good condition; however, Angie is concerned about the future of her garden as they have invested a great deal of time and money into it.

Angie and I sit down on the patio with Kip on her lap, and discuss her expectations and concerns for the garden. I explain the need to prune several times a year for optimum flowering. Together, we develop a Plant Health Care Program by incorporating pruning, deep root fertilizing, watering, soil analysis and our Plant Monitor Program for insect and disease management.

This is the beginning of a long term relationship and the first step toward maintaining a beautiful garden. As Angie and I work together to prioritize the tree care to be done and establish realistic goals, Angie is delighted at the prospect of enjoying a healthy, attractive garden. She has also gained peace of mind knowing that Shady Lane has a reputation for client satisfaction.



# PHC FOCUS

The word is out, it is only a matter of time. The Toronto Board of Health will be reviewing concepts and making proposals for a bylaw regarding the use of chemicals within the green industry this spring. It is expected that changes will occur within the year restricting the use of many products.

Although the green industry utilizes only 2% of the total volume of pesticides in Canada, and the regulations are among the most stringent in the world, the perception is that the usage is much higher, and that these products threaten human and animal health. For these reasons, it is anticipated that restrictions will be imposed; however, at this time it is unknown what products will be included.

The landscape represents a sizable part of the investment in your home, cottage or business. The health and vigour of each tree and shrub is a direct indication of the overall worth of the investment. If a landscape is properly cared for, it will provide aesthetic pleasure and strengthen the property value. Plant Health Care helps you protect your landscape investment by maintaining healthy vigorous plants. It has been argued that the most critical factor of PHC is tree and shrub selection and placement. Plants that are placed and planted properly will have better vigour and are able to withstand insect and

disease. Secondly, basic needs must be met: sun, light, water, and oxygen to the root system are essential requirements. Research shows that up to 90% of all insect and disease problems can be attributed to deficiencies in basic growing conditions. Most plants that succumb to infestation do so, not because they are defenceless against the infestation, but because their poor health has sapped their energy and reserve. Healthy plants will require extensive pest controls as they possess their own system of natural defences. To achieve and maintain a healthy landscape, one must implement a Plant Health Care Program that includes: pruning, soil analysis, watering, providing supplemental nutrients and the management/monitoring of insects and disease.

However, at times, it is necessary to assist plants that are infected with insect and disease. Shady Lane has been utilizing alternative practices in the management of insects and disease for over fifteen years. Our qualified technicians use regular site inspections and monitoring to identify the insect and disease present, and make a decision whether treatments are required. Often, beneficial insects are present and no treatments are required. But, there are various other practices that a technician can also utilize prior to opting for chemical treatments. Proper

pruning techniques by an Arborist allow more air movement through the canopy of trees and shrubs, thereby reducing insect infestations and diseases. Pruning can also be used to remove branches infected with black knot, diplodia tip blight, bronze birch bore, dutch elm disease, and spruce gall. Fungal diseases can be reduced by raking and disposing of the leaves in the fall. It is not recommended that the leaves are composted or mulched as the spores can over-winter. Some insects such as scale, gypsy moth mass, tent caterpillar, and fall webworm can be manually removed. Banding is an effective method of controlling crawlers such as cankerworm and gypsy moth. Water pressure can be utilized to blast out caterpillar nests. Injections are used to inoculate trees with various insecticides and fungicides. This method greatly reduces the chemical released into the environment as it is injected into a closed system.

Shady Lane has reduced the dependence on chemical intervention by using the methods outlined above *and* providing clients with an aesthetically pleasing landscape. We continue to research new methods to reduce the use of chemicals.

*Plant Health Care is a successful, proactive approach that works with and benefits the environment.*



# Q & A

ASK THE EXPERTS AT SHADY LANE

**Q.** I have just moved into a house with a small lot and there is a large Norway Maple growing in the back. It fills my entire yard and is growing over into the neighbouring property. It provides too much shade for my garden and the neighbours complain about the lack of sunlight and leaves that fall into their pool. I want to keep the tree, but I feel that they are forcing me to cut it down. Can you give me advice so I can keep on good terms with my neighbour?

**A.** There are many issues at stake here, but the most important is the vitality and the structural integrity of the tree. This must be assessed by one of our Certified Arborists. If the tree is found to be viable, then we suggest to prune the tree away from the neighbours' property in order to allow filtered sunlight onto the garden below. This pruning will help diminish the amount of leaf drop and increase the amount of sunlight into the pool. It must be understood by your neighbour that this tree provides many benefits to the entire neighbourhood and most municipalities have bylaws that prohibit the removal of healthy trees. It would be a good idea to have our Arborist meet with you and your neighbour to help resolve the issue.

**Q.** After this tree is pruned, will there be enough light to sustain a healthy lawn?

**A.** As your tree is a large Norway Maple on a small lot, it is difficult to achieve enough light penetration to grow grass. Instead, it is our recommendation that you consider planting a shade garden. This could be achieved by mulching the back yard and installing a stepping stone pathway and shade tolerant plants. These include a variety of large and small shrubs: downy serviceberry, witch hazel, dogwood, red and yellow twig, hosta, fern, bleeding heart. Imagine not having to cut the grass every weekend!



[www.shadylanetreecare.com](http://www.shadylanetreecare.com)

## STAFF PROFILE

After fifteen years with the Town of Markham, Linda Hawkins has joined Shady Lane as our Plant Health Care IPM Supervisor, a position she believes will enable her to accomplish her goals.

Linda has a Diploma in Horticulture/Urban Forestry from University of Guelph and a Forestry Diploma from Sault College. She is a Certified Arborist with a pesticide license and holds certifications to operate numerous pieces of forestry equipment, giving Linda the ability to perform skills ranging from operating an aerial device to maintaining databases.

Her municipal experience includes all aspects of tree maintenance, diagnosis and treatment of insects and disease, as well as working as a Bylaw Inspector for Property Standards. She participated in Communities in Bloom, Arbor Day and various school programs.

Linda enjoys all sports but doesn't claim to be an expert at any; however, she does teach white water kayaking and wilderness survival skills. In the winter, she frequently travels south to sun, surf and swim.

"I am looking forward to furthering my skills and knowledge to meet the challenges that are imposed upon Plant Health Care professionals and to do my part in creating a healthy environment."

## Tree Trivia



Squirrels can climb trees faster than they can run on the ground.

An elephant's trunk is strong enough to tear a tree out of the ground, yet dexterous enough to untie a knot and sensitive enough to smell water three miles away.

Frog bones form a new ring every year when the frog is hibernating, just like trees do. Scientists count these rings to determine the age of the frog.

The Swiss Family Robinson tree house in Disneyland has 300,000 fake leaves on it which are changed twice a year to reflect the seasons.

Studies show that hospital patients with a window view of trees recover significantly faster and with fewer complications than comparable patients without access to such views.

One large tree can provide a day's oxygen for up to four people.