

Autumn Season Review

The onset of the Autumn season sees our trees start to wind down, the growth we have seen over the summer slows and the leaves on our deciduous trees may begin to look a little tired. There are still plenty of chores to undertake at this time of year and our reward will be seeing our deciduous trees develop their Autumn colours. Here are some of the tasks and tips we need to be aware of in the Autumn. The advice is general in nature and as always, it is good to know your specific species.

- **Feeding.** Continue to feed your trees through early autumn but reduce the frequency a little and change to a low nitrogen fertilizer. Foliage growth is not required at this time of year, but woody branches and roots need strengthening before the coming winter. Some people use a 0-10-10 fertilizer, while others use a tomato feed. Give deciduous trees their last feed in mid-autumn but continue to feed evergreens and conifers until late autumn.
- **Watering.** Although rain may become more frequent, continue to monitor your trees as normal. Your trees may have a full canopy after the summer growth period and even after a heavy shower the soil may not get a good soaking. Reduce watering as winter approaches and if deciduous trees have dropped their leaves.
- **Wiring.** It's best not to wire deciduous trees at this time of year, but wait until the winter season when the leaves have fully dropped. Late autumn is a good time to wire pines however.
- **Pruning.** Most trees should not be pruned after early autumn. Pruning naturally stimulates new growth, which at this time of year would not have enough time to harden off before winter. The exception is thinning out of pines towards the back end of autumn which may stimulate back budding the following spring.
- **Monitor trees for pests and disease as usual.** If a tree looks particularly unhealthy it may be wise to lift it from its pot to inspect the roots for mites, aphids, weevils or root rot. If the roots are infested with pests you may need to soak the entire root ball with insecticide. Severe root rot would have to be treated now for the tree to have any chance of survival over winter. The presence of root rot would indicate a lack of air at the roots caused by a poorly draining potting mix.

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