

Inside This Issue:

- Almstead Around Town
 - Fall Landscape Prep 101
 - Tree Risk Assessment • Fall Fertilization
- ...and more!



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Tick Alert!

Almstead has an organic option...

Over 3,000 people in the tri-state area are diagnosed with Lyme Disease every year. Infection rates in our area are among the highest in the country. The US Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends applying pesticides in your yard to control tick populations. When applied properly, tick pesticides (known as acaricides) are extremely effective for tick control.

As an alternative to acaricides, Almstead offers organic tick control using Cedar Cure™, which uses cedar wood oil to kill and repel ticks. Almstead technicians understand where ticks hide; we use powerful sprays to penetrate leaf litter for effective coverage. We are experts at tick control; in addition to treating your property, your arborist can make recommendations on how to make your yard a less tick-friendly environment.

The life cycle of ticks takes about 2 years to complete. After hatching from the eggs, ticks must eat blood at every stage to survive. The best defense is to repel or kill them before they can find a host. We recommend, at a minimum, a treatment in spring, early summer and fall. However, depending upon your environment and use of the property, it may have to be more frequent.



Places to Visit in the Tri-State Region

New York: The Brooklyn Botanical Garden

Opened in 1910, the BBG is comprised of 52 acres and is home to a variety of plants and birds. It also features several specialty gardens including a Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden, an aquatic garden, a herb garden, and even a children's garden where kids can plant their own crops. A garden-wide installation of 18 sculptures by renowned Japanese-American artist **Isamu Noguchi** is currently on display until **December 13, 2015**. They were specifically chosen for various settings at the Garden and interact subtly with the setting's rolling hills, rocks, ponds, and plantings. www.bbg.org



New Jersey: Presby Memorial Iris Garden

Located in Montclair, the Garden was created in the 1920s as a memorial to Frank H. Presby who loved Iris flowers and worked to hybridize them. Today, it is home to over 10,000 irises of approximately 1,500 varieties and often referred to as the "rainbow on the hill" because of their varying colors. The Garden features a variety of unusual trees and shrubs that were chosen for their branching pattern, color, time of flowering, and leaf shape. The "PresBee Sanctuary" has 7 active hives with well over 100,000 Italian honeybees. The honey collected is sold at the Garden's Gift Shop. www.presbyirisgardens.org



Connecticut: The Adventure Park at the Discovery Museum

This 5-acre park in Bridgeport allows visitors to experience trees from up in the forest canopy – walking, climbing and zip lining from tree to tree. It consists of 11 different color-coded "aerial trails" featuring 180 tree platforms that are connected by bridges and zip lines. They range in difficulty from beginner to advanced climber. The Park also features two kids' friendly areas, the Monkey Grove and the Labyrinth. After dark, luminescent LED lighting is turned on in the Park to create a magical "Twilighting" effect while maintaining the beauty of the forest. www.discoveryadventurepark.org



Plant Health Care Clients:

To properly update (or create) your program for next year's growing season, it's important to schedule a complimentary inspection with your arborist before winter sets in.

Arbor Notes



Fall/Winter 2015

Almstead Around Town



Tree Climbing Championship

Almstead was a sponsor of this annual event, organized by the New York State Arborists ISA Chapter and held at Planting Fields Arboretum in Oyster Bay, NY. Arborist **Dan Groves** competed in the "Belayed Speed Competition," while our technician, **Mark Brooks** (with red helmet in photo) was one of the judges of the "Secured Footlock Event" and presented awards to the winners.

Wave Hill Gardner's Party

In September, Almstead sponsored the 2015 Gardner's Party at Wave Hill public garden and cultural center in the Bronx. The fund-raising event celebrated 50 years of the garden and honored its founding Director of Horticulture, Marco Polo Stufano. This is our third year of sponsoring the event. We are thrilled to have the opportunity of giving back to this magnificent public garden and organization. We also donated our services in the Silent Auction at the Gardner's Party and presented each attendee with a Dawn Redwood sapling. Photo: Peggy and Ken Almstead with Karen Meyerhoff, President and Executive Director of Wave Hill.



Hawthorne Fall Foliage Festival

Held at Broadway Field, right next to our branch office in Hawthorne, NY the event featured pumpkin painting, kids rides, food and live music. Almstead was one of the

sponsors of the festival. We also had a table set up to answer questions and provide information related to tree, shrub and lawn care. Photo (L-R): Russell Wagner, arborist, Michael Almstead, VP and Tim Katenkamp, Hawthorne branch manager and arborist at the Fall Foliage Festival.



Career Fairs

Almstead's HR recruiter, **Michelle Mazzullo**, and arborists **Dan Groves** and **Russell Wagner** were at **Paul Smith's College** in upstate NY for the Fall Career Fair. Both Dan and Russell are alumni of this popular college for arboriculture and environmental science. Dan, who was also a professor there, enjoyed meeting some of his old colleagues and making contact with present students for possible internships and employment at Almstead. We will also be attending the career fair at **SUNY Cobleskill, NY** in November. Photo: Arborist Russell Wagner at Paul Smith's Career Expo.



Westchester Home Show

Almstead will be at booth #104 of the fall Westchester Home Show at the Westchester County Center on November 7th and 8th. Arborists from our Hawthorne and New Rochelle branch offices will be there to answer technical questions, make recommendations, and hand out Almstead goodies, including Colorado Blue Spruce saplings. Contact your Almstead branch, or "friend" us on Facebook, for complimentary passes to this event.

Fall Landscape Prep 101

Fall is a good time to inspect, restore, and prepare your landscape for not only the coming winter but for next spring as well. Follow these tips for a prosperous growing season in 2016.

Prune Some Species Of Trees

Fall is a good time to prune your trees, especially of dead, dying, diseased and broken branches. Consult with your arborist before you start pruning. It may be better to wait until winter, and even early spring prior to bud break, to prune certain species of trees.

Inspect Trees For Stress

Fall is an opportune time for an arborist to inspect your trees for stress. All of our arborists have training in tree risk assessment while some have also undergone a new qualification known as TRAQ through the ISA (see article inside). Trees that are showing indications of declining health are more prone to

failure in extreme weather conditions. Various fruiting bodies, known as conks (see image) could be an indication of severe heartwood or root decay and are typically in bloom in the fall season. If you spot these fruiting bodies, please don't remove them yourself. Rather, call your arborist or photograph it and send it to us for identification; some are more harmful than others.

Install Additional Support

Many trees need additional support to reduce the risk of structural failure. The most common reason is the presence of one or more co-dominant stems or v-shaped crotches (see image). Cabling and bracing can sometimes be used as a solution in combination with pruning to reduce the chances of failure. Ask a certified arborist to inspect your trees to see if this is an option. Not all structural defects can be mitigated in this way.



Clockwise: (1) Pruning (2) Conks (3) V-Shaped Crotch (4) Lawn over-seeding

Prepare Your Lawn

It is best to pay attention to your lawn while it is still green to help it withstand winter and return with more vitality in spring. This includes testing your soil, core aerating your lawn to allow air, water and nutrients to penetrate, over-seeding to fill in bare spots, and top-dressing your turf with a layer of organic high-grade compost and sand mix.

Schedule your complimentary seasonal inspection with your Almstead arborist, if you haven't done so already. This is the best first-step you can take towards getting your landscape ready for 2016.



A Letter from the CEO



I hope you had a good summer. The favorable weekend weather couldn't have been better for social events, however trees and shrubs in particular had a dry and challenging summer. Unfortunately it sometimes takes years to realize the full effects of this stress, so creating optimal growing conditions using best management practices is crucial.

With fall here and winter just across the horizon, I want to remind you to take a proactive approach in caring for your landscape. It is relatively inexpensive when done consistently and properly. This means *proper* pruning, *proper* mulching, *proper* watering, and *proper* fertilization based on soil testing. All these practices can be done poorly and can cause more harm than benefit in the wrong hands. We need to care for our landscapes all year round to maintain the value of our "green" assets. That's why two of the most important services we offer are our ongoing **Plant Health Care (PHC)** programs, and our **complimentary tree and shrub inspections** performed by our arborists each fall.

In this issue we have several timely articles that will help you stay informed about topics that affect your landscape during this time of year, including: tips on restoring and preparing your landscape for next year; an update on Emerald Ash Borer (how far this invasive pest has spread and what can be done to fight it); creating healthy soil in fall through fertilization; the benefits of using tree risk assessment methods to mitigate the risk of tree failure, and; a profile on arborist Michael Marks who has been with the Almstead team 20 years this season!

You should have received our seasonal inspection mailer in the last week or two. If we don't hear back from you, our staff may reach out to you to schedule your appointment. We believe this **free service** is critical to the health and beauty of your landscape and is our opportunity to review the needs of your property with you — as well as to update and critique our care.

I wish you a productive fall and winter, a happy Thanksgiving, and a wonderful holiday season with your family and friends. Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

Ken Almstead, CEO

International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist NY0335
Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) • Organic Lawn Care Professional

Invasive Pests: EAB Update

The **Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)** is still public enemy #1 in our region. It is an invasive pest that has destroyed millions of ash trees in the U.S. since it found its way here from Asia in 2002. It was first discovered in New York State in 2009 and it is estimated that about 5% of all ash trees in the state have been infected so far. In 2012, Connecticut became the 16th state to have EAB within its borders and it has affected 1/3 of the state's communities. The beetle was spotted in Bridgewater, New Jersey in 2014 and has quickly spread to 5 counties so far.

Federal, state and local agencies are doing their best slow down the spread of this invasive beetle in public forests and urban areas. Methods that are used to control EAB include destroying infected trees, quarantining trees and firewood in regions with infestations and, in some cases, inoculating ash trees to resist infestations.

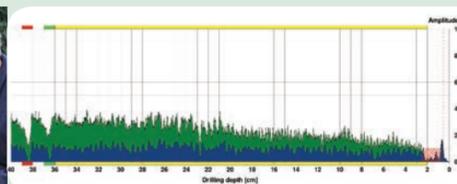
Scientists from Vassar College may have recently found a possible solution for EAB when they discovered *Oobius agrili*, an Asian wasp that is a parasite of the Emerald Ash Borer's eggs. The USDA has approved this method of combating EAB. So far, over 9 million wasps have been released among ash trees in an effort to slow down this deadly pest.

Infestation by Emerald Ash Borer is inevitable in our region. However, trees can be preserved if they are inoculated before they are infected. Talk to your Almstead arborist to find out how you can protect your ash trees from EAB. A health assessment of the ash trees in question as well as its overall contribution to the landscape and a cost analysis should be evaluated prior to treatment.



Tree Risk Assessment: Mitigating the Risk of Failure with TRAQ

Inspecting mature trees periodically for hidden decay, structural weaknesses and diseases can extend their lives and mitigate the risk of failure of the tree or its branches. Falling trees and branches can cause serious injury to people and extensive damage to property. It takes a trained and experienced arborist to inspect a tree, conduct the required testing and interpret the results accurately.



The TRAQ system utilizes a detailed tree risk assessment form that arborists complete while inspecting trees on a

property. In addition to basic data, such as species, diameter of the tree at breast height (DBH), tree height and crown spread, it also requires the arborist to record and evaluate other detailed information about the location, conditions, defects in the tree's trunk, crown, and roots, as well as potential targets if the tree or its branches fall. Based on this information, as well as results other testing, using specialized tools such as a Resistograph (see image and graph), the arborist is able to create a comprehensive report that offers a complete analysis of each tree and its risk of failure.

All Almstead arborists have training in tree risk assessment and usually inspect trees visually when they are on site for issues with the trunk, crown, and root zone. In addition, some of our arborists have also undergone the more extensive **Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ)** program offered by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). The TRAQ method provides a standardized and systematic process for assessing tree risk. It helps arborists and property owners decide whether a tree should be retained, removed, or whether risk mitigation techniques, such as pruning, cabling, etc., should be considered.

When Changing Color in Leaves is a Warning Sign

By the time you receive this issue of *Arbor Notes*, fall colors should be in full peak swing. For deciduous trees, leaves changing color in fall is natural. However, premature color change in the leaves of a tree is also a warning sign of stress. When trees accelerate the process of shutting off their leaves for the winter, it is usually in response to some stress such as root disease, drought or soil compaction, to name a few. There is a long list of other factors that can cause trees and shrubs to stress and decline. Most of the time it is related to a combination of many factors and it is rarely one primary cause. *Your Almstead arborist can determine the source of the problem and suggest recommendations to rectify it before it develops further or results in the loss of the tree or shrub.*

Almstead Arborist Michael Marks



With over 40 years of experience in the green industry, Michael Marks, a Westchester County native, is an expert on tree and shrub species in our region. Michael joined Almstead in 1995 and celebrated his 20th anniversary with our family this year. His passion for his work and love of trees has influenced him to want to give back to the community and keep the landscapes in our region flourishing.

Michael is an ISA certified arborist and a member of the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA). He has been primarily servicing clients in Scarsdale, Bronxville, Eastchester and White Plains in New York, along with select key accounts that require his expertise throughout the metro area.

With his many years of experience in arboriculture, Michael is a valued mentor to the rest of the Almstead team. He also shares his knowledge with the community by taking part in Arbor Day activities in the region — including planting and maintaining trees at the Magic Treeture Forest Nursery in Eastchester, NY.

"I enjoy being in close touch with nature everyday and take great pride in saving and protecting it," he said. "I am also fortunate to work for a company that cares about its clients and employees and is passionate about the environment and the science of arboriculture."

Michael is a nature enthusiast who enjoys gardening, fishing and golfing.

A Day of Fun!

Over 150 employees and their families joined the Almstead family at Five Islands Park in New Rochelle, NY on August 1st for the Company's annual picnic. It brought together arborists, technicians, office staff and management for a day of fun and celebration.



Fall Fertilization: Essential for Plant Growth

In fall, the active growth of plants and trees slows down and nutrients taken in from the soil are instead used for health-promoting functions such as root development and disease resistance. It is therefore important, more than ever, for soil to be nutrient-rich and healthy at this time.

When you think of healthy soil, think about the forest floor. When leaves and branches fall to the ground in the forest, they decompose naturally and break down to "feed" the trees. These soils are teeming with biology and are rich in growth nutrients with almost zero compaction outside the footpath or trail. Contrast this with our urban and suburban landscapes where in most cases leaves, grass clippings and any natural debris of any kind are blown away or vacuumed up, and you can easily see why our soils are in need of supplements to sustain health.

Plants require macro-nutrients (*Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium or N-P-K*) as well as micro-nutrients (*trace elements such as boron, magnesium, manganese, iron, zinc, copper, molybdenum, and selenium*) to grow and thrive. The first step your Almstead arborist will take is to conduct a soil test to find out exactly what is lacking. Based on the test results, we prepare a custom blend of fertilizer that addresses the deficiencies of macro-nutrients in the soil. Most of our soils in the Northeast have plenty of Phosphorous so we leave it out unless soil tests indicate a deficiency (*Westchester County has a ban on Phosphorous in fertilizers*). We also use compost, organic supplements, and specially prepared organic teas to provide soil biology to naturally promote not only nutrients but also plant health and vigor.

Fall fertilization is important because proper nutrients in the soil will help your plants and lawn survive the harsh winter conditions and make them thrive in the next growing season. However, exceeding recommended fertilizer application rates or improper application timing can negatively impact the soil and surface water. *Always consult your Almstead arborist.*

Have You Considered...

Evergreen Magnolia is a medium-sized evergreen tree with dense branches that displays large creamy white fragrant flowers when in bloom, from spring to fall. They are native to the southern United States but several cultivars have cold-hardiness that can accommodate the climate in the Northeast.

Latin Name: *Magnolia grandiflora*

Common Name(s): Evergreen Magnolia

Tree Type: An evergreen with dense branches.

Sun and Water Requirements: Full sun and regular watering (weekly), more often in extreme heat.

Expected growth: Slow growing — up to 20-30ft high and 30-35ft wide.

Foliage: The leaves of this evergreen are large and glossy and stay this way all year long.

Flowers: Creamy white petals that wrinkle appear from spring to fall.

Landscape Value: Evergreen Magnolia trees will add some green to your landscape in the fall, and big beautiful white blooms in the summer. It's a year round centerpiece for your property. They are also deer resistant.

Trivia: The magnolia family is very ancient, with fossil remains dating back to between 36 and 58 million years ago.



Antidesiccants

Leaves and needles often lose a detrimental amount of moisture during the winter. Prevent damage to your evergreens with an antidesiccant treatment.



Organic Care

Organically caring for your trees and shrubs isn't just a fad. It's a long term, eco-friendly approach with strong science behind it. To get started, ask your Almstead arborist about organic solutions for your property.

Fall Planting Season

Fall is an ideal planting time for trees and shrubs. That's because plants focus their energy on root establishment now, rather than on top growth.



Pruning your Trees in Fall & Winter

Bare trees allow arborists to clearly see the entire branch structure of your trees, making for easier identification of defects and potential hazards. Let us help with the health, appearance and safety of your trees by pruning them now.