

Selecting the Right Fertilization Prescription

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Trees have had their share of problems this year.

- They have had to suffer from diminishing root systems during the last 2½ years of the long, accumulating drought.
- Wood boring insects numbers have risen to extremely high levels and are attacking various tree species.
- Chlorosis (yellowing due to decreased chlorophyll levels in the leaves) has begun or intensified on susceptible trees.
- Needle diseases of evergreens are commonly visible.
- Fungal leaf spot diseases are high and causing defoliation.
- Root rots have affected many root systems to some degree.
- Dieback and decline has started on a lot of trees because of these problems.
- Bad “pruning” from storms, well-intentioned homeowners or unschooled practitioners has added injury to insult.

All these, working together in varying combinations, have left our trees stressed, vulnerable to further insect and disease attack.

One of the most powerful tools arborists have at their disposal to help trees recover from stress and damage is fertilization. It is often necessary to help trees by controlling insect or disease attack, but as far as providing help that actually improves tree health and vigor, fertilization is the cornerstone.

Several options of fertilizer formulation enhance our ability to help your trees recover and avoid potential problems:

- *Polymer-based nitrogen in a specially balanced, complete fertilizer.* This allows us unmatched control in dosing correctly for an entire year without “pushing” the tree or stimulating unwanted growth. This provides the necessary elements for growth, defense, replacement of leaves or roots and compensating for physical and environmental stresses.
- *Root biostimulant and humates-based option for tree fertilization.* This enables the roots to be primarily targeted, which is often necessary to compensate for drought, construction damage and root rot damage. It is invaluable in assisting trees *without* stimulating key root rot, vascular, fungal shoot blight or other diseases, such as verticillium wilt, phytophthora, sphaeropsis, or fireblight. It is indispensable in encouraging newly planted trees to become established, especially in our difficult, heavy, clay-based soils.
- *Combining root biostimulant with varying levels of complete fertilizer.* This provides for special requirements based on tree condition.
- *Chelated iron,* alone or as an inclusion to spring or fall fertilization, can help to fight or prevent chlorosis from soil deficiency.
- *Manganese* can also be used, alone or as an inclusion, to help fight this unique micronutrient deficiency.

Your Wachtel Certified Arborist is best qualified to choose the right options and combinations to design the program tailored for your specific situation, avoid helping tree enemies, and to maintain optimum tree health. This is a prime element in the **Plant Health Care System** of care. Fall is the perfect time to fertilize because roots naturally peak their growth as the leaves shut down for the year. This will better prepare your tree for a long winter and help it to be able to successfully “wake up” next spring!