<u>Tree Talk</u>

Pruning Your Trees

It's time to start thinking trees and tree care! With the recent snowfall we have had, it seems like winter will be around for a while, but in actuality it won't and now is the time to start thinking about tree maintenance. One question that I get numerous times a year is, when is the ideal time to prune trees. In the upper Midwest, the month of March is an ideal time, so get your hand pruners out! Pruning should stop in mid-April when the buds begin to swell and until the leaves have fully emerged. After that, there is nothing wrong with light pruning throughout the year.

Having the proper tools is vital when caring for your trees. Make sure your pruning device, whether it be a hand pruner or hand saw is very sharp and of good quality. Also, make sure those pruning devices are specifically made for use on trees. You want good clean cuts and no bark damage.

Deciding what branch to prune off can sometimes be the biggest decision. On younger trees, those between the age of 1-10 years, it is important that they have one distinguishable leader. Basically, you should be able to go from the lower trunk and follow it all the way up to the one main leader at the top of the tree. If you have multiple leaders, identify the one you want to keep and prune out the others. This must be done when the tree is young, and follow up attention will be required as the tree grows. Next, identify where you want your lowest permanent branch to be. This will help you in identifying other lower branches you may want to remove over time. Then follow up on removing broken, dead and rubbing branches. These are all good rules to go by when dealing with large growing shade tree types.

It takes time to learn and master the art of pruning, if you have questions, or want more information, please feel free to call or email me. Aaron.kiesz@aberdeen.sd.us or 626-7015.

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