

# Tree Talk



Fall 2008

A PARTNERSHIP WORKING TOWARD  
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY FORESTS

## Community Canopy Fall Workshops

Community Canopy is sponsoring two fall workshops. On October 31 there will be a workshop on **Insects and Diseases of Native Trees in the Landscape**. Our speakers will be a team of entomologists and a pathologist from the U.S.D.A. Forest Service.

On November 7th there will a workshop on **Pruning and Caring for Fruit Trees**. It will be taught by an experienced orchardist and will be held at an orchard in Green Bluff.

Both workshops are in the morning (9:00–Noon), and will be preceded by coffee and snacks. Community Canopy has applied for pesticide credits from both Washington and Idaho, as well as CEUs from the ISA.

There is a \$5 per person, per workshop fee to help with the costs of workshop materials. Pre-registration is urged since there will be limited room.

If you received this newsletter in the mail, there should be a workshop brochure also enclosed. You can also find workshop registration info on the Community Canopy website at [www.communitycanopy.org](http://www.communitycanopy.org), or contact any of the Community Canopy contacts listed on the back of this newsletter

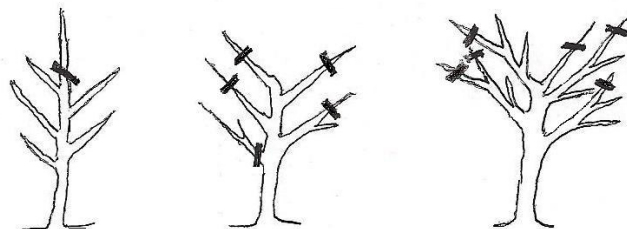
Do you know someone who would like to be on the Community Canopy mailing list? Let us know by sending their contact information (mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address) to the address on the back of this newsletter

## Pruning Fruit Trees

Many people choose to incorporate fruit trees as part of their ornamental landscape. In our area there are many types of fruit trees to choose from. Apple trees, cherry trees, and peach trees are just a few that thrive in our region.

After deciding to plant a fruit tree, you need to choose a pruning method. There are two accepted methods to prune fruit trees. The first is to encourage a dominant leader a prune the tree for structure like you would any ornamental tree.

The second pruning method is used to promote fruit production and limit the height of the tree. This method eliminates the central leader and promotes growth horizontally so that fruit is easily accessible. If you decide to prune your fruit tree this way, you will be pruning more branches more often. If you would like to learn more about pruning fruit trees for fruit production, register for the Community Canopy workshop to be held at a Green Bluff orchard on November 7th.



*Examples of pruning cuts in 3 successive years to limit the height of a fruit tree*

## Community Canopy Web Site

We are excited to announce that Community Canopy has a new web site. You can get to it by typing the following address into your web browser:

[www.communitycanopy.org/](http://www.communitycanopy.org/)

On the web site you can find Community Canopy publications, including current and past newsletters., and events such as our up-coming workshops. You can also find information on our major tree care messages—planting trees correctly, providing adequate water, and avoiding damage from turf care equipment. We also give links to good sites for additional tree care information.

Our thanks to the Panhandles Lakes RC&D for hosting this web site.



**Contact Community Canopy at:**

Coeur d'Alene 208/769-2266  
 Post Falls 208/292-2315  
 Hayden 208/772-4411  
 Spokane County Conservation  
 Dist.—509/535-7274

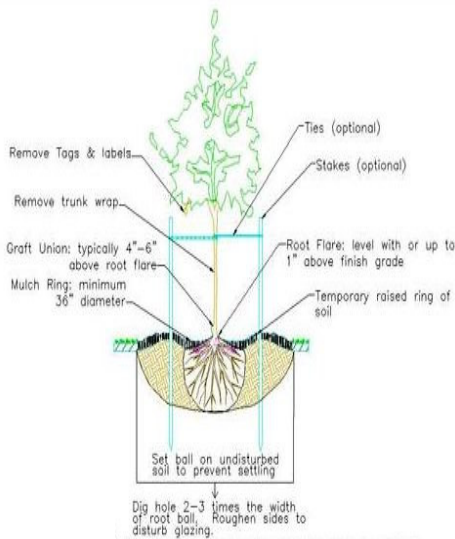
Web Page: [www.communitycanopy.org](http://www.communitycanopy.org)  
 Write: c/o Urban Forestry, City of Cd'A  
 710 E. Mullan Avenue  
 Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

## Tree Planting Standards

Thanks to those who provided feedback on the tree planting details. We did make some modifications to the details. Each of Community Canopy's member communities is now in the process of adopting these as their standards. This should make it easier on those landscape contractors who routinely work across municipal and county lines.

The new standards are for bare root, container, and B&B (balled & burlap trees) and can be seen and printed from our web site (listed above).

Not on the web? Call Katie at 208/415-0415 and she will be glad to send you copies by either e-mail or snail mail.



## Upcoming Events

- October 31 – Tree Care Workshop “Insects & Diseases of Native Trees in the Landscape” at Q’emiln Park in Post Falls
- November 7 – Tree Care Workshop “Pruning & Caring for Fruit Trees” at Hidden Acres orchard at Green Bluff
- January 22-23—Turf, Tree & Landscape Conference at Coeur d’Alene Resort (Contact WSU at 800/942-4978)

## Fall & Winter Tree Care Tasks

Fall is the time that trees are most famous for going 'dormant' by losing their leaves. Many people give no further thought to trees until spring brings them “back to life”. Fall and winter are actually ideal times to do some essential tree care.

**Provide adequate water:** Some advise to start withholding water in early fall so that the trees will go dormant. Dormancy is actually triggered by things such as day length. As long as trees have functioning leaves, you should provide them with adequate water for their needs. This is especially true of new trees to the landscape that still have small root area.

**Encourage root growth:** Although the top of the tree may be dormant, roots actually grow for up to two months after leaf loss and start growing again almost a month before the buds break. You can encourage root growth by applying a fertilizer *after* leaf fall. Use a fertilizer that is high in phosphorous and potassium (for root growth), but low in nitrogen (which encourages top growth). Phosphorous is extremely immobile in soils, so must be incorporated into the soil, watered in well, and/or applied as a band.

**Mulch:** Using an organic mulch has many benefits year-round, including improving soil structure, improving soil oxygen, and preserving soil moisture. If your trees are not mulched, consider doing it this fall. It will help to moderate soil temperature over the winter. Apply 2 to 4 inches in depth and keep it at least 3 inches away from the tree trunk.

**Remove stakes:** The function of stakes is to allow roots to get established in the surrounding soil without the stress of root ball movement. However, once that objective is achieved, the stakes need to come off so that the tree trunk can benefit from laying on wood under normal environmental wind stresses. If the stakes have been on for over a year, they should be removed unless you observe that the tree is still not well anchored and/or will be exposed to extraordinary winter winds.

**Break down tree “wells”:** Building up a berm around the roots of newly-planted trees is a good way to provide them with a quantity of water that will slowly soak into the root zone. However, in the winter it can cause problems if snow builds up in the wells, melts, then re-freezes. Unless you want a root “popsicle”, create a break in the berm so that excess water can drain off. It will be easy to restore the berm in spring.

**Tie up arborvitaes:** To keep the weight of snow from splaying out the upsweeping branches of this and similar shrubs, use wide strapping or ties to encircle the shrubs from bottom to top.

**Mark tree locations for snow plows:** This could be important if it is a big snow year and you have small trees on the side of the street, or even close to your own driveway, walkway, or deck.

**Plan for pruning:** Winter is an ideal time to prune trees. Just remember to resist the temptation to prune trees planted this year. They will need at least another year of maximum leaf coverage to provide energy for the tree to establish more roots. Maples should be pruned in early winter to avoid the unsightliness of sap flow, which begins in mid to late winter.