

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

By Roger Funk, Ph.D., Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio

Q: How can I tell two years after transplanting if a locust and a maple tree have been properly root pruned by the grower? If they have not, what should be done to save the trees.

A: I can think of no way other than digging and inspecting the root system, which is rather drastic a measure unless you have reason to suspect a problem.

If the top is beginning to die back, selectively prune the branches and monitor the soil water throughout the growing season for the first three to five years. Water - either too much or too little - is a primary reason why newly transplanted trees fail to establish properly and often die.

A vertical hole drilled within the root area to the depth of the planting pit is helpful in determining drainage. Free water should not remain in the column for longer than a 24-hour period following rain or irrigation.

Purchasing stock from a reputable nursery and following the established standards for planting will result in a healthy, vigorous tree with minimum maintenance. Proper cultural practices such as fertilization, watering and pest control during later years will rarely compensate for improper planting.

Q: I have read articles that mention ready-mixed baits for rodents but have not been able to find a source. Can you help?

A: Rodent baits are available in a number of premixed forms, loose grain, paraffin pellets or blocks, and nonparaffin blocks or pellets. You may write to the Rodent Control Fund, Agric. Experiment Station, W. Lafayette, IN 47906 or you may want to contact a few of the following manufacturers of these products:

Bell Laboratories, Inc., 3699 Kinsman Blvd., Madison, WI 53704, 608-241-0202.

Chempar Chemical Co., 60 E. 42nd St., New York, NY 10017, 212-687-3990.

J.T. Eaton & Co., Inc., 1393 E. Highland Rd., Twinsburg, OH 44087, 216-425-7801.

ICI Americas Inc., Agric. Chem. Div., Wilmington, DE 19897.

Southern Mill Creek Products, Inc., PO Box 1096, 5414 56th St., Tampa, FL 33601.

Velsicol Chemical Corp., 341 E. Ohio St., Chicago, IL 60611

Contact your local pest control distributor for immediate supplies of premixed rodent baits.

Q: What can I use to control speedwell and ground ivy, now that Silvex is no longer available?

A: Dicamba (Banvel), although it is not recommended for application on turf over the root system of trees and shrubs.

Q: In the tree industry, there seems to be two opposing opinions to trunk injections for nutrients, Dutch elm disease, and insecticides. What is the latest information?

A: Any break in the bark that exposes the wood can be considered a wound, and all wounds can serve as an entrance for decay organisms. Among the factors that can affect the resultant discoloration and possible decay following injection are tree species, time of year of injection, material injected, tree condition and the wound type, location, and number.

Dr. Shigo (Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, Durham, NH) has done extensive work with wound response in trees and is largely responsible for educating the industry in regard to the potential hazards of injections. Our policy is to consider injection only if other methods of treatment are not effective or are not feasible. Some internal decay resulting from injection is better than no treatment and a dead or unsightly tree.

Q: Bermudagrass got started in the fringes of our country club and is now growing into the greens. Is there some way we could kill the bermudagrass?

A: You cannot selectively kill the bermudagrass with chemicals. Nonselective herbicides such as Glyphosate (Roundup) can be used to spotkill the infested turf area, followed by reseeding or sodding.

Q: Virginia is in a strange growing zone. It is neither cold like the North nor real warm like the South. Can you help?

A: Much of Virginia is located in the Transition Zone where some species of both cool-season and warm-season grasses grow where neither is well adapted.

In general, cool-season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass and creeping red fescue are better adapted to northern Piedmont and areas west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Warm season grasses such as Bermudagrass and zoysia are better adapted to eastern Virginia and southern Piedmont except in shaded areas.

Turf performance of recommended cultivars can be greatly improved by following proper management practices. Contact your Cooperative Extension Service for recommendations for your specific area.