Help Your Plants Beat the Stress of Urban Care

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Start Out Right (if you have the opportunity)
Construction Damage

✓ Construction pose hazards to existing trees
✓ Adding excessive soil under a tree’s drip line poses hazards
**Construction Damage**

- Tree root system is typically unseen but very extensive
- Tree roots must be protected
Construction Damage

✓ Addition of driveways & sidewalks, phone lines & other underground utilities pose hazards to existing tree roots
Tree Damage from New Pavement
Tree Damage from Ike’s Saltwater Flooding

✓ Tree canopies often display similar symptoms whether root damage is caused by concrete construction or flooding by saltwater!
Staking Trees

- If the tree does not need staking, then don’t!
- Stakes should be removed as soon as feasible.
- Avoid staking trees longer than one year.
Construction Damage

✓ Make regular inspections to ensure that anchor lines are not overly tight.
Construction Damage

✓ Damage from overly tight anchor lines can result in unhealthy trees
Construction Damage

- Damage from overly tight anchor lines can result in unhealthy trees
Classic Symptoms of Root-Stressed Trees & Shrubs

- Browning of leaf tips and/or leaf margins is a classic symptom of root-stressed plants
- Common occurrence of incorrectly transplanted or cared for plants
Line trimmers do considerable damage to trunks of trees & shrubs.

Improper use of line trimmers help support nursery sales!

Lawn mowers can also cause damage.
"Line Trimmer Disease"

- Damage inflicted by line trimmers and lawn mowers can provide avenues of entry for several wood-rotting fungi such as those that produce conks.
Avoiding “Moweritis” and “Weed-Whacker Disease”

✓ Mulching can help avoid mechanical damage by providing visual and physical barrier
Trunk Guards

- Don't forget to remove trunk guards as trees grow.
Pruning Trees & Shrubs

- Avoid top-cropping trees
- Flush of new growth has weak stems and subject to problems with insects and diseases.
Pruning Trees & Shrubs

 ✓ Properly pruned branches heal well.

 ✓ Do not leave stubs.
Pruning Trees & Shrubs

✓ The limb on this tree was broken off by Hurricane Ike
✓ Before each hurricane season, always inspect trees for weak or damaged branches
Pruning Trees & Shrubs

- Prune *young* multi-trunked trees such as oaks, elms, etc. to one central trunk
- Narrow-angled (less than 30 degrees) trunks typically form weak attachments
Pruning Trees & Shrubs

Narrow-angled trunks have weak attachments
Proper Irrigation
Proper Irrigation
Time clocks...
A double-edged sword
Lawn Fertilization

- Fall application in mid-October to early November
- Spring application in mid-April (two mower cuttings rule)
- Fall application most important
- Practice “tough love”
Lawn Fertilization

✓ General recommendation without a soil test is 15-5-10 fertilizer
✓ Soil test every 2-3 years recommended
✓ Practice “tough love”
Use of Weed Killers

- Timing of application is critical
- Application near trees & shrubs may endanger plants
- Best defense against weeds is a healthy lawn
“Cement Fertilization”

- Concrete does not respond to fertilization!
- Careless distribution can result in pollution of reservoirs, rivers and other water systems
- Sweep up any spillovers and apply to lawn area (do not hose area)
Bradford Pears Bloomed After Ike
What are the 3-Rs for Achieving

- Gardening Success
- Homeowners Happiness
- Environmental Friendliness
In the RIGHT PLACE
With the RIGHT CARE
Thank You

- Texas AgriLife Extension Service
- The Texas A&M System
- We provide educational programs on horticulture to serve the needs of our community residents
- Visit the Galveston County Extension Office at 5115 Hwy. 3 in Dickinson
- Call the Master Gardener Hot Line at 281-534-3413, ext. 1
- Visit our website at: aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.htm