

ART & ARBOR

Soil Health | Forest Fungi | Summer Tree Care

Ask the Arborist

Question: Is it okay to prune trees in Summer? I have been told it causes too much stress.
- Evelyn R.

Answer: Absolutely! You can prune trees in summer.

Flowering trees and shrubs benefit from summer pruning. This includes cherries, plums and apples as well as magnolias, lilacs, viburnums, hawthorns and rhododendrons. Some deciduous trees can also do well and evergreens are fine to prune in any season.

Beat the Heat: Summer Tree Care

As the heat of summer rolls in, the wellbeing of your trees becomes paramount. Here's your guide to keep your trees healthy this season:

- **Deep Watering:** Trees crave a deeper soak. Give them a long, slow watering to reach those parched roots.
- **Perfect Timing:** Water in the early morning. This gives trees ample time to absorb the water before the day's heat.



Unseen Guardians: Mycorrhizal Fungi

By Wade Janzen and Aiden Zickmantel

When the warmth of spring and summer breathes life into our trees, a vital partner in their health and resilience is right beneath our feet: mycorrhizal fungi.

Fungi? Isn't Fungus a Bad Thing?

Just like there are beneficial bacteria in our gut that help to digest and absorb vital nutrients, these microscopic fungi are significant partners in a tree's life. They create extensive networks of fine, root-like structures called mycelium that make essential soil nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus available to trees. In exchange, they glean energy produced by trees during photosynthesis¹. The relationship is mutually beneficial.



- **Fertilizer Faux Pas:** Fertilizers often damage trees in hot and dry conditions. Trees are focusing on managing heat stress, not nutrient absorption.
- **Mulch Magic:** Mulch and biochar does wonders! It conserves water, stabilizes soil temperatures, and promotes future growth.



Keep mulch away from trunks. Trees need their base exposed to breathe.

- **Sign Language:** Keep a keen eye on your tree's leaves to monitor stress - wilting, yellowing, or premature falling are cries for help.

Remember, a little goes a long way.

New from Arbutus

We have started to offer biochar soil amendment, tree watering bags, and mycorrhizal inoculation to interested clients. Reach out to us to book or learn more.

art

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experts in tree safety
and beautification

As trees become stronger, more resilient, and better equipped to absorb water and ward off pests, they provide additional energy to the fungi – it is a win-win.

The Power of Connection

More than just individual partnerships, these fungi connect multiple trees underground and facilitate resource exchange. In forest environments, mature host trees act as a hub by connecting to the whole forest and nurturing hundreds of species of mycorrhizal fungi. The network is a remarkable team effort, and it is especially helpful for new saplings that need to gain a foothold².

What about city trees?

Urban trees often miss out on the benefits of mycorrhizal fungi. The challenges of city life, like soil compaction and pollution, frequently disturb the development of these vital mycorrhizal networks³.

As we ponder our summer garden care, we should consider ways to improve water and mineral retention in our soils. Time and effort is required to amend soil with biochar, organic matter, or mycorrhizal inoculation, but the rewards can be incredible. We can avoid unnecessary costs (eg. commercial fertilizer) and benefit from a greener, healthier urban canopy by creating conditions that reliably build healthy soil year-over-year.

References

1. Goltapeh, E. M., Danesh, Y. R., Prasad, R., & Varma, A. (2008). Mycorrhizal fungi: what we know and what should we know?. *Mycorrhiza: State of the Art, Genetics and Molecular Biology, Eco-Function, Biotechnology, Eco-Physiology, Structure and Systematics*, 3-27.
2. Simard, S. W. (2018). Mycorrhizal networks facilitate tree communication, learning, and memory. *Memory and learning in plants*, 191-213.

