

## Maple Street Trees

Results of investigation as to cause of diseases, and recommendations for minimizing future problems.

A committee comprised of B.J. Davis, Dave Humphries, Bob Kappus, John Reynolds, and Steven King toured the neighborhood and investigated the problems that seem to be occurring with our Red Maple Trees. After discussion with OSU Extension Office here in Tulsa as well as one Arborist, we have arrived at a conclusion as to the cause of the problem.

Disease or Problem: The bark of the street trees seem to split open, primarily on the west side of the tree. All trees are not affected, but enough show evidence of the problem that we were concerned. After the bark splits, the inside of the tree is exposed to various insects, which can damage or even kill the tree. If you look inside the split bark you might see small bore holes at the bottom of the cracked area.

Probable Cause: Our discussions revealed a consensus as to the cause of the split bark. It was identified as Sun Scald, a condition that sometimes occurs when trees are young and under stress due to environmental conditions. In this case, the cause was probably a result of lack of adequate water. This caused the trunk/bark of the tree to lose its resilience and when baked under our July and August sun (or even our winter sun), the result was a splitting of the outer bark.

Solution: After our investigation, we offer the following solution/treatment to the problem:

- a. First, everyone should be aware that young trees need supplemental water during the first few years that they are planted. Even the addition of irrigation systems is not adequate to provide enough water during our intense summers. Everyone, therefore, should plan to provide additional water at least during the months of July and August. Additional water might also be required during some or all of September.
- b. A treatment has been recommended by both the OSU Extension office and the Arborist. It consists of applying a granular fertilizer and insecticide around the base of the tree on an annual basis. The product that was recommended was Bayer Tree & Shrub Protect and Feed. It can be purchased at Lowe's or most nurseries. It costs about a third less at Lowe's (around \$24.95 per container, blue plastic). Application of the product is based on measuring the circumference of the tree and reading the recommended amount from the label. This treatment is recommended as an annual application just for the good health of the tree.
- c. We feel the loose bark on the tree should be trimmed in order to minimize any hiding places for insects or diseases.
- d. We found no one who would recommend painting the wounds on the tree with a pruning compound. Most experts now feel that the application of a pruning compound only serves to seal in any disease or insect if they are already present in the tree. Our group was not unanimous on this issue.

e. During a discussion as to the use of a tree wrap to control Sun Scald, we were told that any tree wrap should never be applied until November and it should be removed by sometime in March. Otherwise, it will just make the problem worse.

Substitute Trees: Some residents have asked that we identify other trees that might be substituted for the Red Maple, but still provide the same tree-lined street scene within The Auberge'. Most experts that we have talked to recommend the Chinese Pistache as a substitute. It doesn't grow quite as large as the Red Maple, but over time will grow to about 40 feet. It offers great fall color, and is highly recommended for our climate in Oklahoma. A few years ago it was named "Tree of the year" for Oklahoma. It is in common use by the Tulsa Park and Recreation District. The Pistache is a harder wood and less prone to disease than the Red Maple.

We reviewed some other trees as substitutes, but found them to be susceptible to the same diseases as the Red Maple.

At the present time, we are of the opinion that residents of The Auberge are responsible for the trees on their property, even though we have a maintenance company that takes care of the front yards. Each resident is responsible for removing any dead tree and replacing it with either a Red Maple or a Pistache, minimum caliper of 2 inches.