



# THE LEAFLET



YOUR SOURCE FOR TREE HEALTH & ARBORICULTURAL NEWS

2011 Spring/Summer

## Inside this issue:

A Closer Look at Powdery Mildew 1

Your Trimmings may Benefit Zoo Animals! 2

Apple Scab Severe in 2010 2

Packers Donate Tree for Every First Down 3

Feature Tree 3

And the Winners are... 3

Day of Service at Wood National Cemetery 4

## A Closer Look at Powdery Mildew

**The appearance of a white powder on the leaves of your trees may not be cause for alarm...**

Many different diseases can affect your trees, however, the severity of individual diseases can vary drastically from year to year. Powdery mildew is no exception to this rule, as there was widespread dissemination of this disease in 2010. We heard many of your questions last year regarding this disease and would like to explain what it is and its implications a little further.

Powdery mildew is a fungal disease that affects the above ground portion of many plants (mainly the leaves). Infection can occur on deciduous trees and shrubs, herbaceous ornamental plants, indoor house plants, and many agricultural crops, but will not infect coniferous species. Plants that powdery mildew is commonly found on include maples (especially Norway maple), lilacs, and roses.

Symptoms of infection include a white to gray colored powdery covering of leaf surfaces and stems. The upper portion of leaves are most often affected and occasionally the undersides of leaves may also show symptoms. Excessive amounts of dust that settles on leaf surfaces can be mistaken for powdery mildew, but with a closer look an experienced observer will be able to distinguish between the two.

This disease is caused by several closely related fungi that are host specific, mean-

ing that the powdery mildew fungus that has infected your roses is not the same as the powdery mildew fungus that has infected your maple tree. High levels of humidity favor the development of this disease among a wide range of host plants.

For trees and many other plants, powdery mildew is only a cosmetic disease that will not affect health. At worst, it may leave the plant looking a little ragged. Health may be compromised on herbaceous perennials, however, which may sustain severe leaf loss.

Steps to reduce powdery mildew infections include picking disease



Andrej Kunca, National Forest Centre - Slovakia, Bugwood.org

resistant nursery stock and increasing air flow, while reducing humidity levels by thinning trees and spacing plants further apart. In fall, infected plant debris should be removed so that it does not serve as a source of spores for next year.

Please contact us if you have any further questions about powdery mildew, or if you would like help in controlling this disease.

American Tree Experts, Inc

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***“A winning season for the Packers yielded a total of 312 trees that will be planted in Brown County this spring.”***



Planting the first tree in the ‘First Downs for Trees’ program.  
Photo: WDNR

## **Your Trimmings may Benefit Zoo Animals!**

This past year, the Milwaukee County Zoo contacted us and asked if we could provide them with fresh tree trimmings for a number of their zoo animals. These trimmings are a favorite food among many of the animals, especially the elephants, giraffes, gorillas, camels, moose, and elk. With so many animals at the zoo, they often run short of fresh trimmings.

Happy to help out our furry friends, we responded enthusiastically to the zoo’s request. Throughout the summer months, our work crews notified the Zoo when they had appropriate trimmings available. Employees of the Zoo then came out to our clients properties and

collected a portion of the trimmings from our pruning and removal services.

Some plant species are dangerous to the animals, therefore, we only provided them with trimmings from Norway maples, sugar maples, silver maples, willows, and mulberry trees. We also provided the Zoo with pieces of wood along with the trimmings, because the elephants enjoy eating the bark.

We attempt to utilize brush/wood waste as much as possible. Offering tree trimmings to the Zoo, so that it may be used as food is an excellent idea and one that is very popular with our clients.

## **Packers Donate Tree for Every First Down**

Last year, the Green Bay Packers pledged to plant one tree for every first down made in the 2010 regular season. A winning season for the Packers yielded a total of 312 trees that will be planted in Brown County this spring.

The program was titled ‘First Downs For Trees’ and is intended to help offset the estimated 450 tons of annual carbon emissions created when the team travels. “Trees are a tremendous natural resource in our communities that too often are taken for granted,” said Packers President/CEO Mark Murphy.

## **Apple Scab Severe in 2010**

Apple scab was particularly severe in 2010, due to higher than average rainfalls throughout the growing season. Many crabapples were completely void of leaves by late summer. Even some of the trees we treated had varying levels of infection, although not as severe as the untreated trees. Very early bud break, which occurred because of some exceptionally warm days in April, contributed to the challenges of controlling this disease.

Apple scab drastically compromises tree aesthetics and repeated infections can be detrimental to health. We recommend our annual treatment program for susceptible trees.

## Feature Tree

### Kentucky Coffeetree

*Gymnocladus dioica*

Height: 60'-80'

Spread: 40'-50'

Form: Oval, round

Growth Rate: Slow-Moderate

Sun Exposure: Full sun

Soil: Widely adaptable

Zone: 3-8

The Kentucky coffeetree is picturesque in summer and also presents a bold statement during winter, with the development of very coarse textured branches. A member of the legume family, early North American colonists used its seeds as a coffee substitute.

A lack of significant insect and disease problems and a high tolerance for urban conditions, makes this tree an excellent choice for the landscape. The coffeetree should be planted in wide open spaces that can accommodate the large size and beauty of this tree at maturity.



Photo by  
Gloria Caddell

## And the Winners are....

In last year's spring/summer 2010 newsletter, we announced that in recognition of American Tree Experts 60th anniversary, we were going to hold a drawing to thank our valuable customers who have helped us reach this milestone. Everyone who had purchased services from us since 2007 were automatically entered in the drawing, along with customers who requested to be in the drawing that had purchased services prior to 2007. The three winners of the drawing are:

### **1st Place: \$200 Cash:** Pam & Dave Strelecki (New Berlin)

In 2009 American Tree Experts pruned and removed a number of Mr. and Mrs. Strelecki's trees. We also performed a root collar excavation and removed girdling roots from their sugar maple to improve the health of this tree.

"We could not have been happier with the service provided by American Tree Experts. They have done work for us in the past too and have always provided exceptional tree care services."

### **2nd Place: \$100 Cash:** Nick & Erin Horman (Brookfield)

American Tree Experts performed cambistat treatments on Mr. & Mrs. Horman's two silver maple trees in 2009 to mitigate root injury and improve drought tolerance.

"American Tree was professional, quick and courteous. Our trees are battling a disease and they offered great knowledge of the problem and solutions."

### **3rd Place: \$50 Cash:** Robert Dala Santa (South Milwaukee)

Mr. Dala Santa selected our company to remove a very large, hazardous basswood that was next to his home.

"Our challenge was to take down a very large tree in a very small space. American Tree Experts got the job done quickly, safely and professionally. We would definitely call them again."



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## Day of Service at Wood National Cemetery

On March 16th, 2011, Jesse Ziemienski (President of American Tree Experts) helped to coordinate the Wisconsin Arborist Association's (WAA) annual day of service. The WAA was founded in 1964 to improve the knowledge and quality of the profession of arboriculture and currently has over 750 members. Jesse Ziemienski was President of the association in 2002 and nominated a client of ours, Wood National Cemetery, as this year's recipient of the WAA's annual day of service.

The Wood National Cemetery is a burial place for American soldiers, which was opened in 1871 on the grounds of the Veterans Administration

Medical Center in Milwaukee. Originally known as Soldiers Home Cemetery, it became a national cemetery in 1973.

Thirty-two WAA member volunteers worked all day pruning and removing trees. The event was featured on TV channels 6 and 58, and in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. The estimated total value in services donated came to \$12,000.

The WAA and American Tree Experts are honored to have had the opportunity to help preserve and care for the trees at this national landmark that honors our American soldiers.

