

Love Letter from . . .

Tree Loving Care

Spring 2011 • Serving All The South Plains Tree Needs Since 1978 • (806) 785-8733

Dear Friends and Fellow Tree Lovers

A few months ago, I think God must have been sitting on the throne, wondering how he could bless James Tuttle. About that time, an old friend and client drove up to the shop and wanted me to go out to his place and give him a price on removing a dead tree that was leaning over the well house. We drove the 5 miles out to his house and within an hour had made a deal on removing the dead tree, mowing the Bermuda lawn that was a foot tall (first time he had set foot on the property in 8 months) and buying the property. I am now the proud owner of a 15 acre farm.

I haven't settled on the name of this farm. Can't decide whether to call it TLC Farm as an extension of the love we have for trees or Sunrise Farm to signify the beginning of a new chapter in my life. In either case, we will grow a lot of vegetables. For many years, I've had the great racket (and privilege) of having fun climbing your trees all day, sending you a bill then processing the debris and selling it back to you. Now, I will be using the composted part of that debris to grow vegetables to sell them back to you.

So, this is your introduction to our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. This year we will grow peas, beans, squash, cucumbers, melons, onions, garlic, potatoes, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, spinach and corn. We may grow other veggies and will grow several varieties of some things.

The way CSA's work, is that you buy shares of the garden. A half share costs \$250 and entitles you to an average of 10 pounds of fresh, naturally grown delicious vegetables each week for 16 weeks of the growing season, beginning June 1st. A full share is \$450 and entitles you to 20 pounds per week. You may pick your own or pick up what we pick. If we pick, it will be packaged up and in the refrigerator or root cellar. Before and after that time, there will be veggies available for sale. That works out to be about \$1.40 per pound. For garden fresh veggies, that's not a bad price. And, you know what you are getting. If you decide that you don't want or need your share that week, it will be donated to the South Plains Food Bank.

If you would like to participate, contact me on my cell, 789-8733, and I will get an application to you.

Whether you pray or not, it is time to start praying for rain. We have had less than 3" of rain since the middle of July last year. That is enough rain in 8 months to qualify as Chihuahuan desert. It isn't enough to support most of the landscapes on the South Plains. In digging ditches for the irrigation at the new farm, we found precious little moisture to 2' depth.

James Tuttle, Certified Arborist TX0117A



Listen to
'Tree Talk for Texas'
9:00 a.m. Fridays
on KRFE AM 580

Tree Of The Quarter

The Italian Stone Pine, *Pinus pinea*, is native to southern Europe and northern Africa. It's large open crown becomes more flat topped with age and performs very well in our area. It grows to 80' in its native range, but should be considerably smaller here. TLC recently worked on one in Odessa that might qualify as a Texas champion. It is about 60' tall with a trunk diameter of about 48".

Like almost all trees, this tree needs twice weekly watering to get it established, but once established, should do well with only supplemental watering during severe droughts. It has very few insect or disease problems.



Italian Stone Pine

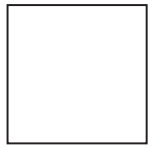
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Return Service Requested



Give Your Trees TLC

Folks, it's dry. Our soil will generally hold about 1" of moisture for a month. What that means is that if we get an inch of rain, a month later, the plants will just then begin to have no water available. This is of course, only an average. Clayey soils will hold a little more and very sandy soils will hold less. High water use plants will use up the water faster. Since we've had so little water fall from the sky, you need to add ½" to 1" of water per month during the winter. The addition of organic matter to the soil and mulching the surface will greatly aid the retention of what water we do have. The down side (yes, there can be a down side to watering-that mostly has to do with watering improperly) to watering with our water, is the high amounts of solids, generally calcium and magnesium salts. Watering too frequently can raise the pH to levels that ties up some of the nutrients and causes plants to be yellow. If you had plants that were an abnormal yellow, give us a call. Our organic fertilization can solve many of these problems.



Compost

Critters and CrudS

Siberian Elms are just now leafing out and the Elm Leaf Beetle won't be far behind. It is time to treat for this insect. Don't wait until the damage is severe to call. It is also time to spray Florel on oaks to help manage the excess acorn crop. Florel does not eliminate all fruit, but when properly applied, can greatly reduce the amount of fruit and nuts.

If our prayers are answered and we get several days of rain, we will also get an outbreak of powdery mildew shortly after, so be ready to spray a fungicide or a Bordeaux mixture on Euonymus and Crape Myrtle.

TLC Update

The Texas Tree Climbing Championship is coming up in only 2 months. It will be in Ft. Worth and Trinity Park May 20-21. Come by and cheer on the climbers from Tree Loving Care. Anthony Rivera has been a technician on several events the last few years, but plans to compete again this year. It is always a very informative event. James Tuttle will be head judge at the Throwball event. This is the preliminary event that showcases a climber's skill at setting climbing lines high in a tree from the ground. It is the only preliminary event that James has not judged or been a technician.

Colby Hurd and Butch Lathey went to the Think Tree conference in Albuquerque in January. It was an excellent conference as usual, full of updated information, teaching us how to better care for your trees.