

Ask The Plant Groom(tm) by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom(tm)

QA1105

Dale,

We are currently have a house built and there are existing Pine trees in the front yard. We were trying to save as many of these trees as possible but the builder in their quest to locate the sewer line has cut through a lot of the root system and left some of the roots exposed to the elements for about 2 months now. During this time frame, we had the 2 or 3 days of hard freeze in Houston.

Are these trees able to survive this trauma and exposure or will we loose them in the long run ? We have the option of cutting them down and replacing them with new Oak trees but I would like to keep the tall natural pines if they can make it. - L. Y.

I'm sorry to hear about your situation. This type of activity does occur statewide when installing water, natural gas, sewer, underground electric service, underground phone service, sprinkler irrigation lines and drainage systems.

For all tree's benefits ditches cut to install any of these should be outside each tree's drip lines or the outer edges of their canopy spread. Cutting across any tree's roots systems is not recommended. This action reduces the ability for trees to absorb nutrients and water which is necessary for long term healthy growth. In some cases this also reduces the tree's abilities to remain upright in storms.

I can not provide you a 100% correct answer to your inquiry through this column. What I do recommend is contacting one or more Certified Consulting Arborist in your area for on site evaluations and recommendations. Most offices of Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A & M University System county offices maintain list of professionals in each geographical location. We native Texans typically call these offices ... the County Agent's office. All counties in Texas has a County Agent. They may all be accessed at <http://texasextension.tamu.edu/> then click on your specific county for contacts and physical locations. While none of these offices recommend businesses they can provide you with contacts. It is then your decision to make the contacts for services or decline.

The freezes you all have experienced in the Houston area and state wide should not be a problem with pine trees.

Good Day Sir,

I live in Corpus Christi, Texas. My lawn (St. Augustine) is about 18 months old and this past summer (2006) it was the BEST in the neighborhood. It was tall, deep green, lush and I was proud. Come this past fall we had rain quite a bit and spots started to develop. I took some samples of the grass to a nursery and the old boy said it had grubs and cinch bugs. I treated for them and STILL the spots kept getting bigger. I call a lawn service and they say it was " ROOT STEM ROT " so I quite watering, should we treat the fungus? Now the yard has spots that seem like they are dead. I still have some green but the spots

that are dead you can pull the dead stuff out real easy. I was gonna use Corn Meal to try to treat the fungus but at this point it looks like perhaps I am too late. Can you help me ? THANK YOU Mr. Groom.- V. P.

I sounds like your lawn had a issue with a disease know as brown patch. This fungal disease may attack St. Augustine lawns anywhere they are grown in Texas and throughout the Sunbelt area of our country. The infection may hit in the spring and/or fall.

Utilizing slow release sources of nitrogen(N) lawn fertilizers applied according to label directions based on soil test results and recommendations is advised. Do not apply quick release sources or over apply nitrogen. Water during the early morning hours prior to 10am is best. Do not water shortly before night time or mid day. Apply water only as needed. Do not irrigate by some preset schedule. Mow frequently.

These cultural tips will help all Texans grow a heather lawn.

If a disease problem is suspected send a sample of the problem to the Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab for analysis and recommendations. They may be found at; <http://plantpathology.tamu.edu/> then click on Extension and the Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab. After receiving the lab's recommendations ... follow them.

Dead spots from brown patch will usually regrow. Grub damage usually appears after initial spring green up. Spots damaged by grubs may be removed like a section of carpet. Chinch bug damage usually appears in the summer heat and not during the fall.

More lawn care information assistance may be located at; <http://aggieturf.tamu.edu/> and <http://tcebookstore.org/>

Dale's Notes:

- * This is prime time to transplant any woody landscape plants.
- * Now is the time to apply dormant oil if needed according to label directions for scale insect control on fruit and nut trees as well as ornamentals.
- * Bare root plants should be planted now, during the dormant season.
- * For standard bush roses mid Feb. is pruning time. If you don't want to prune roses plant ... EARTH-KIND(tm) Roses.
- * It's time to plant cool season veggies statewide.
- * If your soil has not been tested for nutrient contents and pH in the past two years now is a good time to get done.

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist, Master Gardener Program Coordinator-Dallas County, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A & M University System, Native Texan, Columnist, Author, Radio/TV Host is also known state wide as The Plant Groom(tm). You may send your horticultural related questions to Dale at dalegroom@mycvc.net.

