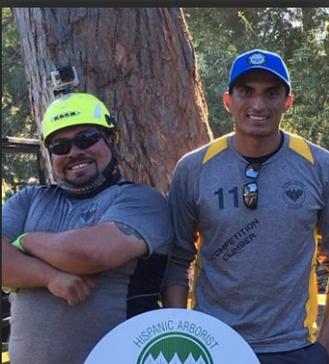


TREE CREW SPOTLIGHT

On October 1st, two of our tree crew members participated in the 4th Annual Tree Climbers Jamboree by the Hispanic Arborist Association. Martin "Poli" Hernandez and Jorge Cortez Jr., long time EC members, participated for the first time. The competition was held over two days. On Saturday, all the climbers participated in four events, including Work Climb, Foot Lock, Aerial Rescue and Belayed Speed Climb. The top 4 teams then went on to compete on Sunday for the championship. Poli and Jorge finished in first place for the Belayed Speed Climb. The guys were cheered on by family, friends and EC crew members who were there to support them.

Congratulations!!!



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Frost

According to the *Farmer's Almanac*, frost typically occurs in our area starting in November and lasting as late as the end of April. It is not always easy to predict the first frost, even with the best of Internet weather information. There are measures that you can take to minimize the damage to your lawn and plant materials.

How does frost form? Under a clear sky, overnight cooling of the air causes water vapor to condense into ice crystals. Do temperatures have to be below freezing before frost forms? Yes, and no. Yes, because the temperature of the water molecules must be at or below freezing. And no, because temperatures are typically measured at four feet or more above the ground. So, while your local weather source may report an overnight low of 37°F, the surface temperature at ground level is generally about 4 to 6 degrees colder.

How can you protect your plants and lawn from frost damage? First, it is not necessary to 'insulate' them to protect them from a light frost. A simple covering of burlap or cloth will often do the trick. However, there is not much that can be done for your lawn.

A lawn however, will typically bounce back in the spring. Especially after applying a dose of fertilizer in late fall that will keep the grass looking greener and will also minimize frost damage.



Plants vulnerable to frost should be planted in protected areas and out of direct exposure, such as next to a building or under the canopy of a tree. The plants will absorb the energy from the adjacent objects (trees) or structures (walls and buildings).

Trees are less vulnerable to frost because they are higher off of the ground and they emit energy toward the ground and not upward toward the sky.

The coldest temperatures occur right before sunrise. The colder the temperature, the harder the frost. A hard frost, (temperatures below 28°F), typically occurs in January or February.



POINSETTIAS HISTORY

Poinsettias are part of large family of plants called Euphorbias, although they look nothing like many of their cactus and succulent looking sisters. The actual name, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, literally translates to “beautiful euphorbia” and is native to our neighbor to the south, Mexico. Grown wild, the Aztecs used the plant for medicinal purposes and to make a red dye, but the common name Poinsettia wasn’t given to the plant until after the 1800’s when Joel Poinsett imported the plant to the United States. The plant started to gain fanfare when the Ecke family started to grow Poinsettias in the early 1900’s for cut flowers and landscape purposes. The bright red color quickly became synonymous with the holidays, and now Poinsettias are grown in all 50 states, are the most popular potted plant in the US, and represent nearly 85% of all holiday plants sold in the 6 weeks before Christmas. The red “bracts” are red color leaves that surround a very tiny yellow “flower.”



Tree Staking – Bracing for Winter

We typically get our strongest winds during the winter months. Plus, saturated soil can contribute to a tree’s instability. The following article will help defend newly planted and existing trees against the elements of nature.

Tree stakes, not to be confused with a nursery stake, are used to support a tree’s trunk and root system until it has matured in size to support its leaf canopy against the elements of nature. Depending on the type of tree, this usually takes about two to three growing seasons.

In order to promote growth and to aid in the development of a strong trunk and branch system, trees need to naturally sway back and forth. Tree stakes with rubber cross-ties, when installed properly, will permit a tree to sway, and help prevent it from being blown over or snapping off.

Tree stakes should be placed firmly into the soil, approximately one foot on each side of the tree. Align the stakes perpendicular to the direction of the prevailing wind, which in this area typically blows from west to east.



Loop the rubber ties around the trunk of the tree. Twist one of the ties into a figure 8 and fasten the loose ends to a tree stakes. Repeat the process for the second rubber tie. If the tree is tall or has a large crown, it may be necessary to add a second row of ties.



Check the stakes periodically and adjust the cross-ties as needed. The ties should be snug, but not too tight against the tree’s trunk. Tight ties may cause permanent damage to the tree. Leaving the stakes on longer will not harm the tree, but when left in the ground too long, they can become unsightly or break off at the base. Therefore, the stakes should be replaced if the trunk size is still not capable of supporting the crown of the tree.

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