



## Fall planting of trees makes sense

By LEE REICH  
The Associated Press

Now is a good time to put new trees in the ground and to move around small ones previously planted in the wrong place. Many people wait to do this until spring. However, spring planting must be delayed until the soil thaws and dries some, and pending this delay,

there is danger that the top of a plant will grow before its roots establish or — worse — before they are even in the ground.

In autumn, trees cannot grow anything but new roots, and they do this whenever soil temperatures are sufficiently warm, above about 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Above ground, growth is inhibited until after buds have been exposed to winter cold.

Mulching the ground insulates the soil, keeping it warm longer so roots can remain active longer. Whether roots grow a lot or a little, trees planted now, at least,

are in place and ready to grow with next year's first breath of spring.

A few cautions are in order for planting trees this time of year, especially where winter temperatures are cold enough to freeze the soil. Freezing and thawing can loosen a plant not yet firmly anchored by its roots in the soil, heaving it up and out of the ground.

A mulch such as straw or autumn leaves prevents winter heaving. The mulch insulates the soil, preventing wide swings in temperature. It does not matter

if the mulch is applied after the ground freezes. The goal in this case is not to keep the soil warm, but, rather, to keep the soil either frozen or thawed as long as possible.

A drawback of that mulch is that it could become home to rodents which will gnaw on young tree bark. Stripping the bark could kill a tree. Thwart these creatures with a cylinder of quarter-inch mesh hardware cloth, 12 to 18 inches in diameter, and 2 to 3 feet high around the base of the tree. Press the base of the cylinder into the soil to prevent

rodents from burrowing underneath.

A few plants do not take well to fall planting if they are bare-root, although potted or balled-and-burlapped specimens do fine. Included among such plants are those with fleshy roots like magnolia, willow oak, yellowwood, and dogwood, as well as hickory, beech, sweet gum, and tupelo.

Besides these exceptions, consider planting trees in the fall — and enjoy the extra time you have in the spring.

news ...  
sports ...  
weather ...

check out our website!

www.record-eagle.com

## Save energy by flushing water heater

If your water heater sounds a bit like the snap, crackle and pop of a breakfast cereal, chances are it has sediment buildup at the bottom of the tank. Besides the nasty noise, sediment causes the heater to work harder — wasting energy and leading to its early demise. One of the most effective ways to remove sediment buildup is to flush the tank at least once annually. Replace the dip tube (that's the plastic cold water inlet pipe within the tank) with one that is curved, and install a three-quarter-inch ball valve in place of the factory installed drain valve. This combination will create a swirling action at the base of the tank leaving it free of sediment, resulting in more effective heating and, perhaps, a better night's sleep for you and yours.

## Inspect your roof before the rainy season

Keep raindrops from falling on your head during rainy seasons by using a little preventive maintenance. Don't wait to get wet before determining the condition of your roof. Look now for signs of trouble, and make the necessary repairs. Use binoculars to look for loose shingles or shakes, or, if you have a tile or slate roof, look for missing or cracked pieces. On shingle roofs, look for curling, fraying, and tears at the edges. Don't forget to check the flashings around chimneys, vents, skylights and other roof penetrations. They should be tight and in good condition. Leaves, pine needles and other debris should be cleared from the roof, gutters and downspouts for proper drainage.

## Paint test

You're getting ready to paint your house and you aren't certain what type of paint to buy. If the old paint is latex, another coat of the same is in order. If the old paint is oil-base, however, an oil primer is an absolute necessity, followed by a finish coat in oil or latex. The important question is which type of paint currently covers your home. Here's an easy way to find out. First, scrub a small sample area with a strong solution of common household detergent. Rinse the area with plenty of fresh water and then towel-dry it. Then, rub a cotton ball soaked in alcohol over the cleaned area. If the paint comes off, it's latex, and if it doesn't, it's oil-base.

## Choosing and caring for a hand saw

Besides making the job easier, using the proper hand saw will make for a better finished product, and will often contribute to job safety. The size and accuracy of a cut is determined by the number of the saw's teeth, also called points, their size and setting. If you want to rough-cut a piece of wood and aren't concerned with what it looks like, a saw with large widely spaced teeth, will do the job. If, on the other hand, you're doing interior trim work like crown mold or chair rail, use a fine-toothed saw. And remember, having the right saw is only half the battle. Keep the saw sharp and store it in a location where the blade won't be damaged by other tools. If the saw must be stored in a tool box with other tools, invest in a blade guard.

# think kitchen & bath

Our knowledgeable staff and extensive design center will help you make the perfect decision for your individual tastes.



# think windows & doors



**MARVIN**  
Windows and Doors  
Made for you.

Whether your preference is traditional or contemporary, we can develop the window and door concept to suit your project.

# think building materials



From the early 20th century to the early 21st century,

Preston Feather Building Centers has helped our neighbors build with confidence by providing fast, reliable and **FREE** delivery.

# think preston feather BUILDING CENTERS

www.prestonfeather.com

**Petoskey**  
U.S. 131 South  
231-347-2501  
800-968-2501

**Harbor Springs**  
Harbor Plaza  
231-348-2990  
800-968-2990

**Northview**  
3890 Charlevoix Ave.  
231-347-2501  
800-968-2501

**Gaylord**  
Old 27 South  
989-732-8862  
888-732-8862



Helping You Build With Confidence