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## **NOTES FROM BCMA: WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR EVERGREEN THIS FALL**

By: Anne Dalrymple

ISA Board Certified Master Arborist, IL-4275BT

This time of year, late-summer/early-fall, it is not uncommon to look at an evergreen tree and notice an internal glow of yellowing needles. At first, it may seem alarming, but likely it is just experiencing the process known as 'Seasonal Needle Drop.'

Evergreen trees remain green throughout the year because they do not shed their foliage all at one time like their deciduous counterpart. However, evergreen foliage does not remain attached indefinitely. Annually, evergreen trees shed their most inefficient foliage during the process of Seasonal Needle Drop. Each tree species is different, with most shedding foliage in the fall, but some evergreen trees will experience this process in the spring or early-summer.

Each evergreen tree tends to keep its needles for a defined length of time. Some tree species will gradually have needles turn yellow/straw-colored eventually becoming brown while with other species it can be quite rapid. Seasonal needle drop with White pines is the most dramatic making the tree look as if it is dying, alarming homeowners not familiar with this natural occurrence. In response to stressful weather conditions such as droughts or prolonged hot temperatures, White pines may drop all their needles, only maintaining the current year's needle growth leaving the tree looking 'tufted' and thin. Arborvitae drop branchlets rather than needles. Their branchlets will turn brown as they age yet remain on the tree for quite some time before falling. Austrian and Scotch pines typically will shed needles that are three years old. Spruce and Fir needles also turn yellow and drop, but the change usually is less noticeable because older needles are thinned progressively making it more gradual than pines.

It is important to check your evergreen trees regularly to determine if the shedding of needles is normal or an indication of something more serious. Trees experiencing normal Seasonal Needle Drop will have a uniform pattern of gradual discoloration, within the interior, from the top to the bottom of the tree. After a few weeks, the needles will fall off leaving the tree looking healthy again. If you are unable to determine if your evergreen is simply experiencing Seasonal Needle Drop, be sure to reach out to an ISA Certified Arborist who can assist with diagnosis.



**Photo: The Morton Arboretum**

# PAWPAW (*ASIMINA TRILOBA*)

By Pierre Hatch, Plant Health Care Department, ISA Certified Arborist IL-4658A

Understanding that my home is located in the northern most range of the Pawpaw tree, I planted four of these trees 15 years ago when I understood this is the northern most range for it in Illinois. In mid to late September, the fruit of the Pawpaw tree ripens.

This is a small tree up to 40' tall and a straight trunk diameter up to 10". It commonly grows in the undergrowth of taller hardwood trees and along streams and bottomland. Thickets will form by means of root suckers as the original tree matures. Its range is from New York west to Iowa and south to eastern Texas and Florida. The bark is smooth, brown/gray bark with shallow fissures as it ages.



## INSIDE LOOK

We recently hosted our annual KTS Fest, a thrilling competition that pushes our team to their limits. This year's event featured a variety of challenging events, including loader operation, mini loader skills, knot tying, stump grinding, and trailer backing.

Competitors from our production and utility teams, along with our mulch staff and even a few mechanics, came together to showcase their skills and have some friendly fun. This annual event is a great opportunity for our team to train together, learn from each other, and build camaraderie.



Pawpaw leaves are alternate on stem 8" to 10" long by 6" wide, elliptical, pointed at tip and narrowed at base that provide yellow fall color. The leaves are the only host to caterpillars of the Zebra Swallowtail, *Protographium marcellus*, butterfly. So, without the pawpaw tree, this large, black and white striped butterfly wouldn't exist.

The dark maroon/purple flowers having both male and female reproductive parts, hang downward from branches. They are up to 2" across with three petals requiring cross-pollination thus it is best to plant a minimum of two trees for fruit production. Flowers are pollinated by carrion flies and beetles attracted to decomposing animals.

The fruit is kidney shaped, oblong, up to 6" in the wild and up to 10" if cultivated and turns light green early to dark brown when ripe. It is the largest edible native fruit in the United States.

The wood is ring-porous, light, soft, coarse grained and green to yellow in color with no commercial value.

For orchard growers, it is definitely an excellent addition of diversity for mankind and nature.





# IRON POOR TREES

By Ben Deutsch, Plant Health Care Manager,  
ISA Certified Arborist IL-1794A

This year, more than ever, it seems even easier to spot stressed trees. This time of the year the one stressor that really stands out is iron deficient or chlorotic trees; trees hardest hit by this are birch and oak trees. Chlorosis can be a serious issue for shade trees where they cannot produce chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is an important leaf component which is responsible for energy absorption for the entire tree. Trees without enough chlorophyll may not be able to grow and live. Trees affected by this year after year will eventually die.

Trees that are chlorotic will have an early yellow color and will drop their leaves early. Most times, the nutrients are in the soil, but the tree's root system has a hard time extracting what it needs from the soil. There are nutrients and iron that can be injected into the soil or the tree itself, to help correct this problem. Adding mulch rings reduces the amount of grass that can take nutrients and water away from the tree. Replacing the grass with mulch not only adds nutrients to the soil, but also helps retain moisture. Removing girdling roots (roots that grow around the tree instead of out) will play a big part ensuring that your tree is able to continue taking up water and available nutrients.

This year was even worse with the drought conditions we have experienced. As a homeowner, watering your trees is the number one thing you can do. Trees need 1" of water per week to help them stay healthy. Check our webpage for watering tips. We mentioned several options that we can do to help turn around your chlorotic trees. To know what is best for your trees, please contact us so that one of our ISA Certified Arborists can evaluate your trees and give you their recommendations.



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# OUT AND ABOUT WITH KTS



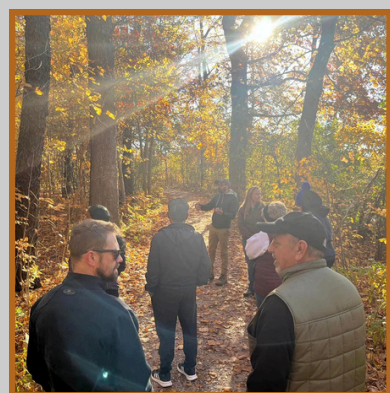
We've been out and about, spreading our love for trees and connecting with you! Here's a quick recap:

**Walk with An Arborist** - Thank you to everyone who joined us for Walk With an Arborist at Meacham Grove FP in Bloomingdale! It was a perfect day to enjoy the peak fall colors and learn from our Certified Arborists, Anne and Kelsey. Stay tuned for more community events soon!

**Saluting Branches** - We were honored to be part of Saluting Branches at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood in September. Our team provided tree care services to honor those who served our country. A truly meaningful experience for us to giveback.

**50th Anniversary Party** - Thank you to everyone who joined us in celebrating Kramer Tree Specialists' 50th anniversary at Cantigny in August! Your support made the event unforgettable. Here's to many more years together!

**Touch a Truck** - We've had the pleasure of participating in three exciting Touch-a-Truck events, connecting with families and showcasing our impressive equipment. From Elmhurst to Lombard and now Wheaton, our team has been sharing their passion for tree care and inspiring the next generation of arborists. We're grateful for the opportunity to give back to our community and create lasting memories.



## Celebrating Our Newest CDL Drivers!



We're thrilled to announce that Sam, Francisco, Janet, and Mark have recently earned their CDL Class A licenses!

A huge congratulations to all four of you on this significant achievement! Your hard work and dedication have paid off. We're proud to have such talented individuals on our team.

Special thanks to Felipe for his guidance and support in preparing our team members for the CDL exam.

Let's keep up the great work!



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300 Charles Court, West Chicago, IL

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