

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Plant ice-resistant trees

A number of characteristics increase a tree species' susceptibility to ice storms: "included" bark, decaying or dead branches, increased surface area of lateral (side) branches, broad crowns, and imbalanced crowns.

Included bark results from in-grown bark in branch junctions. This is a weak connection and enhances a tree's susceptibility to breakage under ice-loading conditions. For example, "Bradford" pear branches often break during ice storms where there is included bark in branch junctions. In contrast, the "Aristocrat" pear has few branches with included bark and sustains less damage during ice storms.

Decaying or dead branches are already weakened and have a high probability of breaking when loaded with ice. The surface area of lateral branches increases as the number of branches and the broadness of the crown increases. With an increased surface area, more ice can accumulate on lateral branches; the greater ice load results in greater branch failure.

Many broad-leaved tree species, when grown in the open, form broad crowns (decurrent branching), increasing their susceptibility to ice storms.

Examples include Siberian elm, American elm, hackberry, green ash, and honey locust. Trees with imbalanced crowns are also more susceptible to ice damage.

Ice storm damage management and prevention

Proper tree placement, away from structures, will reduce property damage. Trees should not be planted in locations where growth will interfere with above-ground utilities – branches that grow into power lines and fail during ice storms create power outages and safety hazards. Trees pruned regularly from a young age should be more resistant to ice storms as a result of removal of structurally weak branches, decreased surface area of lateral branches, and decreased wind resistance. Professional arborists can install cables and braces to increase a tree's tolerance to ice accumulation in situations where individual trees must be stabilized to prevent their failure.

After storm damage has occurred, hazardous trees and branches require immediate removal to ensure safety and prevent additional property damage.

Trees that can be saved should have broken branches properly pruned to the branch collar (stubs and flush-cut pruning result in weakly attached sprouts and future insect and disease problems). Loose bark should be cut back only to where it is solidly attached to the tree. A split fork can be repaired through cabling and bracing.

Tree species resistant to ice damage can be planted to reduce tree and property damage from ice storms.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day."

I didn't want to write this article. The issues that it addresses sound a dissonant chord amongst the holiday music still echoing in my head. For many Americans, the shootings in Tucson, Arizona which occurred on January 8th banished all memories of holiday cheer. Almost two weeks later the tragedy still dominates the headlines as the media does what it does best, which is to embrace the negative, dissect it and display it from every possible angle. On the information superhighway as well as on the Interstate, the only time we slow down and look is when an accident occurs.

Monsters have always lived among us and for their victims it does not matter whether we find our explanations in the psychology of a diseased mind or in the spiritual realm of a lost soul. History is full of events which equal and exceed the horrors of Tucson. Events like this have occurred for as long as humans have occupied this planet and no amount of knee-jerk legislating or pulpit pounding will prevent them from happening again.

Today we will leave the re-telling of the tragedy with its accompaniment of theories and explanations to others and focus instead on one positive development which has grown up out of the event. It has been easy for us to criticize President Obama. His healthcare plans and his relationships with the financial industry invite criticism and for me personally, if the election were held today, the emergence of a qualified candidate from any political party would make it unlikely that Mr. Obama would get my vote. Nevertheless, credit must be given where credit is due. When disaster occurs the nation needs leadership. In his speech for the victims of the Tucson shooting, President Obama provided that leadership.

On the other hand, the pundits who make their living fanning the fires of hatred continued their efforts. Sarah Palin, whom some consider as the standard bearer of the Republican Party, made a pathetic attempt to inject herself into the discussion. Her comments about the tragedy in Tucson were, characteristically, all about her. If her irrational behavior and celebrity seeking have not yet served to divest any disenchanting voter of any illusions as to her qualifications for leadership, her response to the killings should do so.

We have not, in my opinion, always (or often) elected the best candidate to the office of President of the United States. Fortunately for our nation, if the man was not ready for the job, the job has many times made the man. Witness the accelerated graying and wizenning of everyone who has occupied the Oval Office. President Obama is no exception. And while his policies may prevent me from giving him my vote in 2012, it is a comfort to know that the country does, indeed, have a leader in the White House.

In closing, consider these words from President Obama's speech in Tucson: "So sudden loss causes us to look backward - but it also forces us to look forward, to reflect on the present and the future, on the manner in which we live our lives and nurture our relationships with those who are still with us. We may ask ourselves if we've shown enough kindness and generosity and compassion to the people in our lives. Perhaps we question whether we are doing right by our children, or our community, and whether our priorities are in order. We recognize our own mortality, and are reminded that in the fleeting time we have on this earth, what matters is not wealth, or status, or power, or fame - but rather, how well we have loved, and what small part we have played in bettering the lives of others."



"IT'S ON MY MIND.." Danny H. Parris

I Don't Mind Waiting

Before any of you get excited and start accusing me of lying, the title of my column is not what I said, but the response of a death-row prisoner. Recently, I was reading a devotional that quoted Larry Moyer telling of a warden who asked a man on death row what he desired for his last meal. The prisoner said, "Man, I would like to have a big piece of watermelon!" The warden said, "Fellow, you must be joking. This is December and watermelons haven't even been planted yet, let alone harvested!" The prisoner said, "I don't mind waiting." Mind you, I don't fit in that category most of the time. Some people are really good at waiting and they are an inspiration to me. They are my heroes. Sometimes I feel so ashamed and embarrassed because of my impatience. I am above the three score and ten bracket and a minister of the gospel. I want, desire and pray to be more patient. So often I follow the pattern of the elderly gentleman who had a 2 p.m. appointment with his doctor. After waiting for almost three hours, he got up to leave. As he passed the receptionist on his way out he told her, "I guess I'll just go home and die a natural death." What really gets my goat most of the time has to do with little things. For example, waiting on elevators has always bothered me. Most folks gently push an elevator button one time. Not me, I am an "elevator button piker"; I "poke" the button numerous times. In fact, if you see any elevator buttons with missing faces, most likely I have been there. Red lights see me coming and whoever operates those things

says, "Here comes the preacher, hold for a long time. He needs to learn patience." No matter if it's the department store, grocery store, hardware store, wherever. If I choose number 7 checkout everyone in the store flocks to number 7 in front of me. Disgusting. How did they know I chose number 7? I believe the devil deliberately told them. Just before Christmas I was in the Post Office and needed to pick up a package and you guessed it, there were thirteen people in front of me and I am not speaking pastorally, I am telling the truth. All of those dear servants were working feverishly, as fast as they possibly could. Do you know that a lot of Baptist (as well as other denominations) who never say bad words will say them in a Post Office? It's true, I have heard them. Well, to make a long story longer, I thought "I will never get out of here!" But I was calm, patient and didn't try to get ahead of the line. All of a sudden a young lady came from behind the counter and said, "If any of you just need stamps or pick up a package I can help you!" Immediately, she reached and took my notice to pick up a package. She was back in ten seconds. I wanted to shout "hallelujah" or "praise the Lord!" Would you believe that I, and the person in front of me (#13) thought of this scripture at the same time: "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (Matthew 19:30)? Sometimes I feel like I am last in patience, but I desire to be closer to the front. Lots of big things don't seem to get my goat as do little things. However, it is true that one little tiny flea can make a big dog scratch himself silly. You would think that a fellow like me who talks at a snail's pace would have no problem with patience.

For this year of 2011 I want to say with that death-row prisoner, "I don't mind waiting!"

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE
By Don Jacobsen

I wish I could tell you how important it is that your kids not watch television.

"What age, Dr. Don?" Well, certainly not as infants, toddlers, or young children.

"You mean, maybe not a lot till they're five?"

No, I mean probably not a lot till they're twelve!

"Twelve? You're kidding, right? Do you know how that would mess up my afternoon quiet time and meal preparation which is when I use the TV as a baby-sitter for my toddler? That thing is a life-saver!"

Actually, I'm not kidding, even though there is no unanimity among the experts as to when it is "safe" to expose youngsters to the electronic screen. My attitude on issues like this is always, Let's take the safe route. So I say twelve. I know it's going to mess up a lot of people's schedules and put me on the Most Wanted list of a lot of kids, but let me share some of the compelling reasons.

A landmark study at the Child Health Institute in Seattle in 2003 caused the pediatric community to take a new look at the influence of TV on young children. One of the very telling conclusions of the study was this: "Early television exposure is associated with the child's ability to pay attention at age 7."

I find that very informative since the current majority opinion in the mental health

community is that the "attentional" types of problems – like ADHD – are inherited. Thus, the treatment of choice is to medicate – give 'em a pill. Even though it's clear that pills don't "re-wire" the brain and symptoms will probably return within six to twelve months.

A 2005 University of Pennsylvania study found that watching even Sesame Street before age three actually delayed a child's ability to develop language skills.

The issue is that the baby's developing brain is being assaulted by long periods of unnaturally short bursts of visual stimulation. As frequently as every 3.5 seconds on average in some programming, the camera cuts to a new scene, a new perspective, a new angle, a new character, a new activity. The wiring that is developing in the dendrite portion of your baby's brain is being taught to function with a micro-attention span which, when he gets to school, is apt to make it seem like this first grader is high on caffeine.

In 1998 the American Academy of Pediatrics handed down the recommendation that their 55,000 physicians should counsel parents not to allow children to watch any television before the age of two. None. Now we understand why. More next time.

Send your parenting questions to DrDon@rarekids.net.

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*

Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

Towns County Water Board Meeting

3rd Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.

Mountain Community Seniors meet the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 2 p.m.

Towns County Democratic Party meets the 2nd Thursday of every month. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.

Towns County Republican Party meets the 4th Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Daniels Steak House. Dinner at 6 p.m., 706-896-7281.

Towns County Planning Commission is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.

Towns County Commissioners meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the courthouse.

School Board Meeting, 2nd Monday each month at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.

Hiawassee City Council 1st Tuesday of month 4 p.m., at City Hall.

Young Harris City Council, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.

The Hiawassee River Valley Kennel Club meetings are held at 7 p.m. the 1st Monday of each month at Brother's Restaurant on Hwy 64 in Murphy, NC. Call President Kit Miracle: 706-492-5253 or Peggy Moorman: 828-835-1082.

The Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259 meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Stephens Lodge #414 F & AM meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in Young Harris.

Board of Voter Registrars meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month



Community Calendar

at 4:30 p.m., Courthouse.

Towns County Board of Elections holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Elections Office (Old Rock Jail).

Towns County Historical Society meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 5 p.m. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 1182, Hiawassee, GA 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:45 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Recreational Dept. Call Eden at 706-896-6921.

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, located at 308 Big Sky Drive (behind the Holiday Inn), Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m. & the meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact us by calling 706-896-0932, mtnregartscraftsguild.org. mtnregartscraftsguild@hotmail.com.

VFW Post #7807 Fish Fry will be 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, 4:30-7 p.m., \$9 a plate, all you can eat.

Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Goolsby Center at YHC. Q & A at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.

FPL Retirees Breakfast will meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Hole in the Wall Restaurant on the square in Blairsville at 9 a.m.

Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter, Trout Unlimited meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Cadence Bank in Blairsville. 5 p.m. Fly Tying - 7 p.m. General Meeting. Everyone welcome.

www.ngatu692.com.

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call John Quinlan at 706-896-2430 or visit www.moaa.org/ chapter/blueridgemountains.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 24-hour phone line 828-837-4440.

Mothers of Preschoolers meets on the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church office at 706-745-2469 for more information.

Chattahoochee Regional Hospital Auxiliary on the 3rd Monday of each month, except the months of July, October and December, in the hospital cafeteria at 1:30 p.m.

Mountain Magic Table Tennis Club meets 6 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Lee (828) 389-0924.

We do Family Oral History of all of our residents. If you have not had your family history recorded and would like to do so, please call the Towns County Historical Society at 706-896-1060.

Full Storytime at Towns County Public Library Thursdays at 1 PM.

Prostate Cancer Support Group meets the 3rd Monday of every month from 5-6 PM in the Cancer Treatment Center Auditorium in Blairsville. For more info call Steve 706-896-1064.

Mountain Coin Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at the Blairsville Civic Center. Doors open at 5:30. Program and auction begins at 6:30. For more information, call Ye Old Coin Shop, 706-379-1488.

Towns County Herald
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