WHY FEED URBAN TREES?

Feeding of urban trees and shrubs is important because they are often grown out of their native habitat, and are subject to adverse soil and environmental conditions. They are under much more STRESS than forest trees.

Compacted soils, poor drainage, restricted root areas, road and street salts, air pollutants, and competition from turf grasses, all contribute to tree STRESS. This increases the importance of regular feeding to maintain healthy growth.

Vigorous, well-maintained trees are more resistant to many insect and disease pests as well. They are naturally more attractive and greater assets to the property.

WHAT DO URBAN TREES NEED?

Trees absorb and utilize at least 13 soil elements. Of these, only Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium are normally considered when fertilizing either the turf area under the trees, or the underground areas of the root zones. Magnesium and Iron though, are almost equal to N.P.K. in their importance to the maintenance of tree vigour in urban areas.

Nitrogen is required in greater amounts than the other elements, and it is often the MOST DEFICIENT in the soils of urban properties. (Soil analysis for N is not particularly useful, due to its transitory nature in the soil, and the large amount extracted by plants in their normal activities of growth.)

Need for supplemental applications of P. K. Mg and Fe is hard to determine since the absence of these elements does not produce the easily visible symptoms that N. does.

Generally, in urban areas, it is wise to feed trees with a complete fertilizer where reliable soil or tissue tests are not available. Plants in alkaline soils may need additional trace minerals (micro nutrients). Iron deficiency is common in certain tree - Manganese in almost all Maples. That is why it pays to include for all of these in any feeding mixture.

APPLICATION TECHNIQUES

Trees can be fed in several ways: Foliar Feeding, Injectively, Deep Root Methods and Surface Placement. This bulletin concerns itself mainly with ROOT FEEDING and/or INJECTIVE FEEDING Treatment.

APPLICATION TIMING FOR ROOT FEEDING

Tree feeding is most effective when supplemental nutrients are available during periods of optimum root growth and/or development.

Although roots of trees may elongate throughout the growing season, ACTIVE ROOT GROWTH most often occurs in early spring and/or late fall when soil temperatures are relatively cool, and when there is little competition from leaves for water and nutrients.

In Root Feeding therefore…best mileage can be obtained when placement is made between late March and late May, and between mid-September and mid-November.

APPLICATION TIMING FOR INJECTIVE FEEDING/TREATMENT

- Should always be determined by the particular circumstances of its use
- It should be prescribed by a competent Arborist
- It must be done carefully with due regard to the tree's genetic ability to handle compartmentalization

This procedure is extremely effective when used correctly.