



GALLAGHER

— TREE SERVICE —

4 Season Tree Care Guide for SouthEastern PA

A stylized illustration of trees in shades of brown and green, framing the text on a light beige background. The trees are simple, with thick trunks and rounded, leafy canopies.

Welcome

Welcome to Gallagher Tree Care's Seasonal Tree Care Guide! We're thrilled to share our expertise with homeowners in Southeastern Pennsylvania, offering tailored advice to keep your trees healthy and vibrant through the changing seasons.

At Gallagher Tree Care, we pride ourselves on being the local experts in all things tree care. With years of experience nurturing the region's unique mix of deciduous, evergreen, and fruit trees, we understand the challenges and joys of maintaining a beautiful, healthy landscape in our diverse climate.

This guide is designed to walk you through the essential care tasks for spring, summer, fall, and winter, providing you with the knowledge and tools you need to support your trees' growth and vitality. From preparing for the spring's new growth to protecting your trees through the harsh winter, we've got you covered.

A large, leafy tree with thick, dark branches and vibrant green foliage dominates the right side of the frame. The tree's canopy spreads across the upper half of the image. In the background, a grassy field stretches towards a line of smaller trees under a bright sky. A white rectangular box with a dark border is centered in the lower half, containing the word 'SPRING' in bold, dark letters. Decorative brown diagonal lines are on the left and right edges, and a green cloud-like shape is in the bottom right corner.

SPRING

New Growth

Spring in Southeastern Pennsylvania brings new growth, blooming flowers, and the awakening of nature from its winter slumber. This season is a critical time for tree care, focusing on fostering this new growth, protecting against late frost, and preparing trees for the warmer months ahead. This guide will explore unique spring care practices, ensuring your trees remain healthy and vibrant.





Inspect & Assess

1. Post-Winter Inspection: Begin with a thorough inspection of your trees. Look for any signs of winter damage or stress, such as broken branches, splits in the bark, or areas of fungal growth. Early detection of any issues allows for prompt action to mitigate further damage.

2. Assess Watering Needs: As the weather warms, assessing your trees' water needs is crucial. Spring showers often provide sufficient moisture, but monitor soil moisture levels, especially for any trees planted in the previous year, as their root systems will still be establishing.



Fostering Health & Growth

1. Soil Care: Spring is the ideal time to test your soil's pH and nutrient levels. Trees require a balanced soil environment for optimal growth. Amend the soil based on test results, using compost or specific fertilizers to address any deficiencies.

2. Aeration: Loosen the soil around the base of your trees to improve air and water flow to the roots. Be careful not to damage shallow root systems. This can be especially beneficial in compacted soil areas or where heavy snow has compressed the ground.

3. Support New Plantings: If you're adding new trees to your landscape, spring is a perfect time. Ensure they receive adequate water (but are not overwatered), stake them if necessary to prevent wind damage, and protect them with mulch or tree guards against pests and mower damage.

Pest & Disease Management



Early Detection

Keep an eye out for the early signs of pests and diseases. Catching issues early can make management more straightforward and more effective. Look for abnormal leaf growth, discolored foliage, or the presence of pests themselves.



Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Implement IPM strategies to manage pests and diseases with minimal environmental impact. This can include physical barriers, selecting disease-resistant tree varieties, and using biological control agents.



Special Considerations for Spring

1. Late Frost Protection: Be mindful of late frosts, which can damage new growth. For sensitive trees or newly planted saplings, consider using frost cloths or burlap to cover them during cold snaps.

2. Managing Weeds: Spring growth isn't limited to trees; weeds will also start to emerge. Control weeds around the base of your trees to prevent them from competing for nutrients and water. Mulching is an effective method to suppress weed growth and retain soil moisture.

3. Wildlife Activity: Spring sees increased wildlife activity, which can sometimes pose a threat to your trees. Protect young trees from deer, rabbits, and other animals that might feed on tender bark and leaves by using tree guards or fencing.




When to Consult an Expert

Complex Issues: If you encounter problems that are beyond your knowledge or if the health of your tree doesn't improve with your care, seek the advice of a certified arborist.

Large Scale Projects: For significant landscaping changes or large tree plantings, professional guidance can ensure the health of your trees and landscape.

Specialized Treatments: Certain pests or diseases may require treatments that are best handled by professionals, such as systemic injections or extensive pruning.

Spring is a season of renewal and growth. By focusing on these specific care strategies, you can help ensure your trees in Southeastern Pennsylvania thrive throughout the coming year. Remember, proactive care and early intervention are key to maintaining the health and beauty of your trees.





SUMMER

Different Trees Have Different Needs

Southeastern Pennsylvania is home to a variety of tree species, each with its specific needs during the summer. Common species include:

Deciduous Trees: Such as maples (*Acer* spp.), oaks (*Quercus* spp.), and ash (*Fraxinus* spp.).

Evergreens: Including Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and Norway spruce (*Picea abies*).

Fruit Trees: Like apple (*Malus domestica*) and cherry (*Prunus* spp.).





Summer Care Tips

Watering

Summer can bring about dry conditions and drought stress. Young trees, in particular, need regular, deep watering to establish roots. Mature trees benefit from less frequent but deep irrigation, especially during prolonged dry spells.

Mulching

A 2-3 inch layer of organic mulch helps retain soil moisture and reduces temperature extremes. Keep mulch a few inches away from the trunk to prevent rot and disease.

Pest Monitoring

Summer is peak season for many tree pests. Regularly inspect your trees for signs of infestation.

Common Invasive Pests & Treatments



Emerald Ash Borer (EAB): This invasive beetle targets ash trees, causing significant damage. Look for thinning canopies and D-shaped exit holes. Treatment often involves insecticides or biological controls and should be managed by professionals.



Spotted Lanternfly: This pest attacks a variety of trees, including maples and fruit trees. Sticky bands around tree trunks can catch nymphs, but mature infestations might require professional treatment.



Gypsy Moth: Caterpillars from these moths can defoliate trees. Early intervention with tree bands and biological insecticides is key.

The slide features a light beige background. On the left side, there is a stylized illustration of a tree with a brown trunk and green foliage. On the right side, there is another stylized tree with a brown trunk and green foliage at the bottom.

Pruning & Damage Control

Pruning: Summer is a good time to remove dead or diseased branches. However, save major pruning for dormant seasons unless there's a risk of damage or disease spread.

Storm Damage: Summer storms can cause limb breakage or uproot trees. After a storm, promptly assess and clean up damage to prevent further harm to the tree or surrounding area.




When to Consult an Expert

Pest Infestations: If you notice signs of pest damage and aren't sure how to proceed, a professional can provide diagnosis and treatment options.

Disease Identification and Management: If your tree shows signs of disease, such as unusual leaf discoloration, wilting, or dieback, consulting an expert can help save the tree and prevent spread to others.

Major Pruning or Removal: For large trees or those near structures, professional pruning or removal ensures safety and proper technique.

Health Assessments: If a tree seems unhealthy or you're planning construction around trees, an arborist can offer guidance on protecting tree roots and overall health.





FALL

A Pivotal Season

The diversity of tree species in Southeastern Pennsylvania, from the vibrant maples and sturdy oaks to the evergreen pines and spruces, each requires specific care as the seasons change. The fall is a pivotal time for these trees as they shift resources to their roots in preparation for winter, making proper care essential.



Common Autumn Issues



Leaf Disease

Fallen leaves can harbor fungal diseases which may infect the tree in the spring. Rake and dispose of fallen leaves to prevent this cycle.

Drought Stress

Trees can experience drought stress in the fall, especially after a dry summer. Deep watering can help alleviate this stress.

Early Frosts

An early frost can damage sensitive trees. If an unexpected frost is forecasted, consider covering young trees or providing a windbreak for protection.



Preparing for Winter

Check Stakes and Guards: Make sure any stakes or tree guards you have in place are secure but not too tight, allowing room for the tree to grow.

Prevent Rodent Damage: Rodents can chew on tree bark in the winter. Place guards around the base of young trees to protect them.

Anticipate Snow and Ice: Know which trees are most susceptible to snow and ice damage and consider cabling or bracing weak branches in advance.




Calling in the Big Guns

Advanced Pruning or Tree Assessment: If you're unsure about how to properly prune your trees or if you suspect a tree might be unhealthy, it's best to consult an arborist.

Fertilization Questions: If you're unsure of the best fertilizer to use or how to apply it, professional advice can ensure you're supporting your trees' health appropriately.

Planting Advice: For new tree selections and planting, a professional can offer valuable advice on the best species for your area and how to care for them.

By following these tips, you can help ensure that your trees in Southeastern Pennsylvania are well-prepared for the winter season and thrive for years to come. Fall tree care is all about preparation and prevention, setting the stage for a healthy and beautiful landscape throughout the year.



A winter scene with snow-covered trees and a path. The image is a photograph of a snowy forest path, with trees heavily laden with snow. A black lamppost is visible on the left side of the path. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow. In the center of the image, there is a yellow rectangular box with a dark brown border. Inside this box, the word "WINTER" is written in a bold, dark brown, sans-serif font. The overall color palette is cool, with blues, greys, and whites, accented by the yellow box and the dark brown text and borders. There are also some abstract brown shapes in the corners and a green cloud-like shape in the bottom right corner.

WINTER

Understanding Your Trees

Southeastern Pennsylvania is home to a variety of tree species suited to its USDA hardiness zones, typically zones 6 and 7. Common deciduous trees include maples (*Acer* spp.), oaks (*Quercus* spp.), and birches (*Betula* spp.), while evergreens might include Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and American holly (*Ilex opaca*). Each species has its own set of needs and tolerances for winter weather.





Winter Care Tips

Mulching

Apply a 2-3 inch layer of mulch around the base of your trees, extending out to the drip line. This helps retain soil moisture and protect roots from extreme temperatures. Be sure to keep mulch a few inches away from the trunk to prevent rot.

Pruning

Winter, while trees are dormant, is an ideal time for pruning dead or weak branches. However, it's important to know the correct way to prune to avoid damaging the tree.

Watering

Trees need hydration even in winter, especially if the fall has been dry. Water your trees deeply before the ground freezes, ideally when temperatures are above freezing, and early enough in the day for the water to soak in.

Winter Care Tips



Wrapping

Young trees or those with thin bark, like maples and birches, can benefit from tree wraps to protect against frost cracks and sunscald. Wrap trunks in late fall and remove the wrap in early spring.

Monitoring for Pests and Diseases

Some pests and diseases are more active or visible in winter. Inspect your trees for signs of infestation or disease, such as unusual bark damage or fungal growths.




Common Winter Problems

Frost Heave: Fluctuating temperatures can cause the soil to expand and contract, potentially uprooting young trees. Mulching helps mitigate this risk.

Sunscald: Occurs on sunny winter days when tree bark heats up and then rapidly cools as the sun sets, causing damage. Wrapping the trunk can prevent this.

Ice and Snow Damage: Heavy snow and ice can break branches. Gently brush off snow from limbs after storms, but let ice melt naturally to avoid damaging the tree.






When to call a pro

Significant Pruning: If large branches need removal or if trees are large, it's safer and more effective to call in a professional arborist.

Disease or Pest Issues: If you notice signs of disease or pest infestation that you can't manage, a professional can offer effective treatments.

After Storm Damage: Severe weather can cause damage that's risky to deal with on your own. Arborists can safely remove broken limbs and advise on the tree's health.

Remember, the care you give your trees in the winter can significantly affect their health and resilience throughout the year. By following these tips and knowing when to seek professional help, you can ensure your trees remain a beautiful and vital part of your Southeastern Pennsylvania home landscape.





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