

**1739   
Plant Health Care**

"Plant Health Care" is a six-component prescriptive care program for your landscape.

1. Tree selection. Do not fall into the trap of selecting the fastest growing tree. They provide shade quickly, however are a source of disappointment in later years. Fast growing trees often outgrow the selected site and their soft wood will break in storms. In later years, the wood will decay and become a liability.
2. Cultural practices. This includes proper watering, mulching and fertilizing. A piñon pine will be fraught with problems when heavily watered and fertilized. However, a cottonwood thrives with lots of water. What is good for one tree may be vastly different for another.
3. Fertilizing. Recognize the symptoms of nutrient deficiencies and the needs of particular trees before you fertilize them. Many trees in the landscape will never need fertilizing; others will.
4. Pruning. Most gardeners prune only when the tree or shrub has overgrown its space or sustained storm damage. Pruning should be considered at all times to help a tree or shrub form good branches. Most shade trees will benefit from pruning every three to five years for proper growth.
5. Cabling and bracing. Only Certified Arborists® should install hardware in a tree to prevent or repair structural damage.
6. Integrated Pest Management is known as IPM. When will an insect damage your trees? Learn to identify insects in your area and, when necessary, use the least invasive pesticide at the proper time to control it. For example, aphids are a nuisance, but will not kill a woody plant. On the other hand, wood borers may kill one if left untreated. Aphids should be controlled when you see them, but most other insects must be controlled at very specific times of the year, even if they are not visibly apparent.

For "IPM & PHC: What are they?" refer to message number [1461](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/1461.html).