

TREES

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really don't see an abundance of them in the area because they tend to not do well here.

Some trees are showing premature fall colors because of blight.

Coryneum blight will cause purple spots and off-colored leaves. As the disease progresses, the center tissue may drop out of the purple spot, leaving holes in the leaves. This disease is also known as "shot hole disease" because of this.

Applying a copper fungicide in the fall right after the leaves have dropped, and again in the spring, will help. Because this is a difficult disease to cure, you'll have to do this for a few consecutive years.

A lack of water can cause leaves to become yellow with black edges. Sometimes it's a problem with the root system that's causing the inability of the tree to take up water. Probing the soil around the root ball using a screwdriver is a good way to check soil moisture.

If the leaves of your tree are yellow with dark green veins, you're probably dealing with iron deficiency. Our soils generally have adequate or even high levels of iron, but they're also alkaline which causes a lot of the iron to be in a form that's not usable by plants.

There are trees that require more iron than others, and some that have a root system that is just insufficient when it comes to taking up the iron. Over-watering or under-watering can exacerbate



It may appear that fall is coming early this year but the reality is, some trees, such as this silver maple, just aren't happy growing in our soils. The result is a yellow or off-color tree. (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/Linda Corwine McIntosh)

iron problems. Some trees, such as red, silver, or Amur maples, as well as pin oak and red oaks are susceptible to iron deficiency. White oak, swamp white oak or chinkapin oak are far better choices. Even aspen, apple, crabapple and peach can have iron uptake problems.

If you really love maple trees, Norway maples are hard wooded and less susceptible to iron problems as well as storm damage. However, if this tree is planted in a dry or hot site, the leaves will scorch in the summer heat.

Bigtooth maple is also a good tree for our area. Ginnala or Tatarian maples are good smaller

maples. You could even use a Tatarian as a large multi-stemmed shrub. A sensation boxelder (maple) is another great tree with nice fall color. Best of all, this boxelder doesn't attract boxelder bugs.

I don't know about you but I'm getting kind of tired of the hot weather. I'm hoping for an early fall and I'm getting anxious to see beautiful autumn colored trees. I think for the time being, I'm going to pretend the colored trees are telling me fall is arriving.

Linda Corwine McIntosh is a licensed commercial pesticide applicator, ISA certified arborist, and advanced master gardener.

Thinking about doves and pigeons

As a young kid, growing up in the foothills west of Golden, I spent my entire free time outdoors. I was even known to spend "non-free time" outdoors, which was a source of aggravation for my father. He felt my time would have been better spent in school, and looking back, he might have been right.

I learned about wildlife on many of those unauthorized free times. One favorite of mine was the elusive dove. They seemed to be everywhere in those days, and were a good source of small game hunting for a youngster.

The season opened right around the same time as school started, Sept. 1. Armed with a single shot shotgun, I would walk the local fields in search of these aerial speedsters. It was one of the hunts I was allowed to partake in unsupervised, except when I was supposed to be in school.

Because of the dove's aerial speed and elusive maneuvers (as any dove hunter will tell you) and my inadequacy with my single-shot shotgun, I very seldom brought one home for dinner. Non-hunters need not worry as I did very little damage to the population.

The first frost was usually a week or two into the season. That frost sent the birds to places warmer, leaving our area void of doves within a couple days. That meant back to my incarceration in school.

It has often been said that a dove is nothing more than a pigeon with a good PR man. While they are members of the same family, (Columbidae, for you scientific types) there are a few differences.

Generally, Coloradans think about the mourning dove and the white winged dove in our state. These birds are identifiable by their colors and size.

The mourning doves are gray with large black spots on their wings. They have a long, thin tail and a black bill and pink legs. In flight, they have a fan-shaped tail with large white tipped feathers.

The white-winged dove is a pale brown color overall, with a bright white stripe along the wing. In flight, this stripe becomes a bright white patch on the inner wing.

In flight, doves make a whistling sound as they buzz past you. Doves are known for their "cooing" sounds, which are made by the males as an enticement to a mate.

Speaking of mates, doves mate for life. A life that can span 30 years in captivity but only three or four years in the wild. Doves reach sexual maturity in as little as seven months.

Females lay two eggs at a time. It is rare for them to lay a single or more than two. The dove may use the same nest many times over. We have a nest in a cherry tree that has been used by doves for over four seasons. The nest was originally built by a robin, but has since been homesteaded by doves.

The eggs are laid eight to 12 days after breeding and hatch 18 days after that. Technically, doves can have nine broods a year, but three or four are more prevalent in our area.

The dove has a royal heritage, being a symbol of peace. White doves that are released at wedding ceremonies are actually homing pigeons. Pigeons have been used as messengers for thousands of years, especially during times of war.

Historical records indicate that pigeons were used during the Battle of Waterloo and during the Franco-Prussian War. During WWI, more than 100,000 pigeons were used as messengers with an amazing success rate of 95 percent.

All is not necessarily right in the dove world. There is an interloper, an invader so to speak, that threatens the mourning dove and white-winged



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay



A photo of an Eurasian collared dove, all puffed out because of the cold. These invaders are more hardy in the cold weather than mourning doves. (Special to Montrose Daily Press/Mark Rackay)

dove. He is known as the Eurasian collared dove or ECD for short.

These invaders closely resemble a pigeon, being identifiable by their larger size and a black, crescent shaped marking on their necks. The sound made by the ECD is more of a wahhhh sound, closer to a screech or a scream.

As their name implies, the ECD are native to Europe and Asia. The story goes that 50 of these invaders escaped from a pet shop in the Bahamas in the 1970s. Within a few years, several of the escapees found their way to South Florida.

In 1982, a nesting pair of ECDs was found near Miami. Since then, their range goes from Alaska to Florida, and everywhere in between. And yes, that includes Colorado.

The ECD was first discovered in Colorado in 1996, near Rocky Flats. They have now populated all counties in Colorado. In fact, no other species of bird has ever invaded and colonized North America with greater speed.

Researchers are worried that the ECD will bully out our native species of doves. Their larger size and prolific numbers, along with their presence around urban areas, tends to drive the native species away, as they combat for the same food, water and nesting sites.

Native doves migrate to warmer climates when the weather gets a bit colder. For me, I noticed their evacuation around the time of the first frost. The ECD does not migrate, and will spend the entire winter here.

This concerns wildlife managers because the ECD is such a prolific breeder. The growing population of ECD may out-compete our native species for food and habitat.

In an effort to control the populations of the ECD, and thereby protect our natives, Colorado Parks and Wildlife has established some special regulations regarding the ECDs. This includes a year-round hunting season, coupled with unlimited bag and possession limits. Hunters are cautioned to be sure of their identification of the invasive species.

As for myself, I don't care much for the invader. I have a long history with our native doves and want to see them stick around forever. It has been many years since I hunted doves. Last time I went, I carried an expensive over/under shotgun, instead of my old single shot. I proved to be of no harm to the native dove population, even with the more expensive shotgun. At least the Colorado doves have nothing to worry about from me.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a director for the Montrose County Sheriff's posse. For information about the posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

For outdoors or survival related questions or comments, feel free to contact him directly at his email elkhunter77@bresnan.net

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