

## Don't top trees

Many trees damaged by severe storms can have large branches broken in the middle by the shear weight of snow or ice. Repairing trees damaged like this is often difficult and more time consuming than the simpler job of "topping" the trees. Topping is a very destructive approach to pruning trees and is NOT recommended. Here are some things to consider if a tree worker talks to you about topping your tree.

### What is topping?

Topping is the indiscriminate cutting of large branches back to long stubs. Topping cuts are made without regard to the

locations of side branches.

### If topping is recommended to you

The most appropriate response to a tree worker who recommends topping is to decline their services and look for another tree service. Topping is never recommended by anyone with a good understanding of trees.

### What topping does

Topping removes a major portion of a tree's leaves, which are needed to produce food. This damaging practice can begin an irreversible decline in the tree.

Topping makes a tree more susceptible to insect pests and

diseases by reducing the ability of the tree to produce chemical defenses.

Branches left after topping become decayed and create a hazardous situation that may cause serious injury or property damage if the branch breaks.

Cuts made by topping stimulate the development of many epicormic shoots (watersprouts) just below the cut, which are weakly attached and are easily broken off in storms.

Topping destroys the natural form of a tree and wastes money. (DJ)



## Look at the big picture

When disaster strikes or stress buildup in families it's important to step back and look at the "big picture." Resources such as cars, a house, tools, clothes and money are important and may help people solve some of their problems. However, it is usually personal, family and community resources that help sustain us when we face emergencies and stress.

The "big picture" has much to do with the way families look at things. One family sees a situation as a problem, another sees it as a challenge. The way you look at a situation influences how you react and handle stress. In fact, your outlook may be more important than the events themselves in determining how

able you are to handle difficult times effectively.

Emphasize the opportunity. Don't fight change—deal with it. Look for ways to make it work to your advantage. Be realistic about what to expect. Don't expect the worst—it often doesn't happen. But don't have unreasonably high expectations either. Optimists not only feel better about themselves and their lives but actually manage their lives better, whatever happens.

Concentrate only on events you can control. Pouring effort into events that are beyond your control will take time that is needed elsewhere. Part of controlling events is planning.

One of the most important ways families can adjust posi-

tively to emergencies, disasters and resulting stress is to take a long-term view of the events and problems. Believing that in the long run problems will work out seems to help families endure daily hassles and major events. Long-term family rewards are often seen as outweighing the short-term problems.

Another effective way to see the "big picture" is to re-frame the situation. Re-framing redefines the meaning of a stressful event in a way that makes it more rational and manageable. Re-framing is seeing the good in the bad or optimistically creating challenges from obstacles. (LJ)



## Backyard habitat

Habitat restoration is important for birds and other wildlife due to our commercial and residential invasion on their natural areas. Humans are very good at building places to live and work, but we tend to not give much thought into creating habitat places where we can live in harmony with other living creatures.

You can restore and create natural areas for birds and wildlife to thrive. Creating your own backyard habitat is easy. All you need to do is make sure you have the four basic elements.

**Food:** Plant shrubs and trees that produce seeds, fruits and nuts. You can provide nectar for hummingbirds when they migrate through the area. Plant flowers that attract butterflies and other insects. Use supplemental feeders that offer seed or suet.

**Water:** Water is important in your backyard habitat. You can offer several different sources of water. Use a birdbath, or place a shallow water dish at ground level. Backyard ponds are increasingly popular and offer aquatic habitat for frogs and

other small animals. In winter, purchase a small heater especially designed to keep your birdbath from freezing during cold Nebraska days.

**Shelter:** Make your backyard a place that critters will want to stay instead of just visit. Plant evergreen trees and shrubs to protect wildlife and birds from weather and predators. Deciduous trees provide roosting and nesting sites. Use rocks, logs and mulch to provide cover for small animals like shrews, 13-lined ground squirrels, toads and insects. Leave a dead or decaying tree stump in your yard. Stumps provide both food and shelter for many creatures.

Places to raise young: As

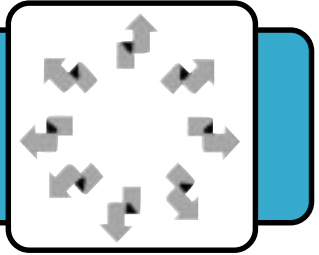
land in Lancaster County is cleared for development, we drastically reduce the number of nesting sites for cavity dwelling birds and animals. Bluebirds, purple martins, woodpeckers, owls and even squirrels compete for nest sites and cavity shelters. Plant evergreens, deciduous trees and shrubs. Provide nest boxes for birds and wildlife to raise their young.

This winter would be a terrific time to put together some nest boxes in preparation for the coming spring. The extension office has many publications on providing backyard habitat, building nest boxes and tips on successful bird feeding. (SC)

### Quote:

*The value of a dollar will never drop as low as some folks will stoop to get it. (UnKnown)*

## Miscellaneous



### Weight of food may affect your weight

*continued from page 6*

weight foods with few calories to help you control or lose weight. Examples include: cooked spinach, strawberries, cooked broccoli, cantaloupe, pink or red grapefruit, carrots and navel oranges. The high water and fiber content of fruits and vegetables add weight yet help keep calorie level low.

At the same time, go easy on light-weight foods that contain a lot of calories. For example: hot fudge sauce, marshmallows, cheese puffs, buttered popcorn and potato

chips. As a comparison, a 4.5-oz. medium orange gives you 13 calories per ounce compared to 150 calories per ounce for a 1-oz. bag of cheese puffs.

The article warns this concept has limits to its effectiveness. Water has zero calories for its weight, but you couldn't live on water alone. It's still important to eat a balanced diet containing a variety of foods. But, comparing the weight-to-calorie ratio of foods may give your weight control diet the extra boost it needs for success! (AH)



### Fall insect pest - Fleas

*continued from page 5*

an animal unless the label specifically states that it can be used on that animal species. Follow restrictions such as age of animal to be treated and precautions such as not treating sick animals or using in conjunction with other medications or on lactating animals. Always store insecticides in a locked

container.

Insecticide treatment for fleas should include the animal's quarters. The quarters should be thoroughly cleaned, including a thorough vacuuming of the bedding. Residual sprays then can be applied to the area the animal inhabits. (DJ)



### Doing the right even though the cost is high

*continued from page 7*

have to encourage honesty by giving an unearned reward? "Real integrity doesn't look for rewards and a person of character does the right thing even when it costs more than he wants to pay," says Josephson. Reporting the error was the right thing to do. To do otherwise would have been as dishonest as taking advantage of a cashier's mistake.

Josephson further points out that his ethics would have been in jeopardy if he hadn't cor-

rected his grading mistake. The student was not the only stakeholder in this incident. It would have been dishonest, irresponsible and unfair to other students and prospective employers to give the student a grade he didn't earn. According to Josephson, "A score on an exam is about competency, not virtue. On the virtue scale, the student didn't do so well." As Josephson said, "I wish he had cared about more than the grade." (LJ)

## Migratory birds love shady coffee

Most people don't know how important coffee is for migratory birds. Many migratory birds spent winter in the forest-like environment of traditionally managed coffee plantations. Scientists have found that shady coffee plantations support hundreds of species of birds.

But, coffee farming in Latin America is changing and coffee is beginning to be grown under full sun. With this conversion from traditional shade-grown coffee, comes a corresponding decrease in migratory bird species. Over 90 percent fewer bird species are found on sun-grown coffee farms.

Well-known North American birds that use shade-coffee plantations during the winter are the Baltimore oriole and ruby-throated hummingbird. A few



other birds are cerulean warbler, Kentucky warbler, golden-winged warbler, painted bunting, wood thrush and Audubon's oriole.

The National Audubon Society suggests that environmentally minded consumers use their buying power and drink shade grown coffee to protect the habitat of traditional coffee plantations. Source: Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center website: <http://www.si.edu/natzoo/zooview/smbc/Fxsh1a.htm> (BPO)