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THE PURDUE LANDSCAPE REPORT

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Why is tree work expensive?

(Lindsey Purcell, lapurcel@purdue.edu)

Expensive and complex equipment is often needed around homes.

There are many different aspects of tree work which include a wide range of costs, but let's start with the most common expense: tree removal. It can be difficult to understand why removing a tree can cost so much when the whole process seems as simple as "just cutting it down." In reality, the work is usually much more involved than making a few cuts with a chain saw and then hauling it all away.

Complexity – Trees being removed often need to be cut apart in sections to avoid dropping the whole tree or large pieces onto the lawn or landscape or into the street. This is a safer approach and also prevents serious damage to the turf and landscape below. News reports are full of accidents involving untrained tree workers, or homeowners, attempting to cut down a tree without the knowledge of how the tree reacts to being cut. Usually, specialized equipment is needed, such as aerial lifts or cranes to access the tree safely. This equipment is costly to acquire and maintain. Some of the typical equipment such as these mentioned can cost more than some homes! Often, the use of this equipment involves setting up traffic control in busy streets where permits and additional flagging support are needed.

Tree work requires training and expertise for safe pruning and removals.

Difficult and dangerous – Tree pruning and tree removal, is difficult and dangerous work. Also, there is a reason why the tree is being removed. Often it has been deemed high risk or presents a danger on the site. Tree crews are regularly asked to work on trees with compromised structure from storm damage or years of neglect. These compromised trees are often dead trees, which are particularly dangerous. A tree that has been dead for several years usually becomes brittle and inflexible. When you try to cut it down, controlling the direction of fall is a challenge and it will often shatter, throwing broken branches in an uncontrolled manner. Often, tree workers are in trees that have electrical conductors running through the branches. That risky situation should speak for itself.

Insurance, Licensing – Because tree work can be hazardous, qualified companies will have expensive liability insurance to protect the homeowner's property, as well as workers' compensation insurance to help cover injuries sustained by the crew, should they occur. You get what you pay for and this includes tree care as well! If you select a company that is less expensive, they may not carry insurance which leaves the tree owner at a high risk of having to pay damages several times the original job estimate, if something goes wrong. Always check with your tree care company to be sure they can validate proper insurance before starting tree work. This applies to any service company which may be used in and around your home or property.

Large cranes may be required to safely remove the tree.

Trained and Certified Workers – Its best to choose a tree care company where the crew has current industry credentials and a history of training and experience. How do you know if a company's staff is trained and experienced? Ask to see their credentials and look for programs such as the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist, or the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) Certified Treecare Safety Professional which are indicators of a professional business with the expertise to perform the work.

Tree owners and managers have the option to interview two or three tree care companies before deciding about tree removal or other critical practices such as pruning. Ask to see a copy of the current insurance certificate as well as copies of the crew's competency credentials. If a company representative hesitates to provide these documents or insists, they don't need to "prove" themselves, find another company to perform the work. Ask for references. This is easy since often all that is needed is to drive by a location to see the quality of the pruning work or removal work completed.

Find a professional

Certified Arborists can provide the best care for your trees.

A professional arborist can assess your landscape and work with you to determine the best course of action to care for and maintain the trees and shrubs in your landscape. Contact the Tree Care Industry Association, a public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture since 1938. It has more than 2,200-member companies that recognize stringent safety and performance standards and that are required to carry liability insurance. TCIA has the nation's only Accreditation program that helps consumers find tree care companies that have been inspected and accredited based on adherence to industry standards for quality and safety; maintenance of trained, professional staff; and dedication to ethics and quality in business practices. You can use this service by calling 1-800-733-2622 or by doing a ZIP Code search on www.treecaretips.org

Also, to check for an ISA Certified Arborist in your area, visit the website www.treesaregood.org then click on the link "Find an Arborist". By entering your zip code, a list of credentialed arborists can be found nearest your location.

Tree care performed properly will be an investment in your property that, when done correctly, will give you valued returns for decades.

Spotlight on Weeds: Common Mallow (Malva neglecta)

(Aaron Patton), (Leslie Beck) & *(Kyle Daniel, daniel38@purdue.edu)*

Biology: Common mallow (*Malva neglecta)*, also known as cheese mallow, cheese weed, and dwarf mallow, is a winter annual broadleaf weed, though it can also act as a biennial if environmental conditions that favor growth persist. It is generally found in low-maintenance turfgrass lawns, nursery crops, and landscapes. The ability of common mallow to survive in multiple environmental and soil conditions, such as frigid temperatures and dry, compacted soils, as well as its ability to survive lower mowing heights, make common mallow a common weed throughout the state of Indiana.

Common mallow (left) and ground ivy (right)

Identification: Common mallow is a broadleaf winter annual weed that has the ability to persist into a biennial or perennial life cycle if environmental conditions are favorable. Common mallow can be found in lawns and landscapes throughout the United States as a low-growing, spreading/prostrate broadleaf weed that will grow more erect in the absence of mowing. It reproduces by seed, which typically germinates from spring to early autumn; however, it is anchored to the ground by a short-to-deep, straight taproot which allows to plant to persist for an extended amount of time. Though it spreads primarily though seed, fragmented stems can also produce adventitious roots when nodes come into contact with the soil and conditions are moist enough. Plants initially develop as a basal rosette, and stems branch-out and elongate along the soil surface as the plant matures. The base of each thickened, hairy stem lies close to the soil surface while the tip (apex) is turned upward. The leaves can range from 0.5 to 1.5 inches in diameter and are located at the apex of thinner stems (petioles) branched alternatively from the main stems. Leaves are palmately veined (similar to fingers branching from the center of your palm), circular- to kidney-shaped, dark green with a 'crinkled' appearance, slightly hairy on both the upper and lower surfaces, and sharply toothed in the margins. Flowers are produced in May and can be present throughout the summer and into October. Flowers appear as 5 white, or whitish-lavender colored petals that are often tinged with purple or have purple veins. Flowers then produce a small fruit that can be described as the shape of a button or a wheel of cheese, hence its multiple common names. Each fruit contains 10-12 wedge-shaped seeds that break apart at maturity. Though common mallow seeds have a relatively low germination rate, they can remain viable in the soil for many years (decades). Often the stems will remain green and viable throughout the winter months, allowing the plant regenerate and sprout from the surviving crown the following spring. Common mallow can often be mistaken for **ground ivy**; however, ground ivy leaves are located opposite each other on the main stem and have rounded edges. Ground ivy also emits a strong mint-like odor when cut or damaged and has square stems commonly found within the mint family but not on common mallow (rounded stems).

Cultural control: None known specifically for common mallow. Hand pulling or hoeing can be an effective method of physically removing the plant when it is young and the taproot is shorter. Its ability to survive in low maintenance conditions helps common mallow out-compete desirable plants in turf.

Biological control: Some research has been focused on developing a fungus to help control other weedy mallows with a small amount of success; however, there are no commercially available products for the biological control of common mallow.

Chemical control: Since it reproduces from seed (generally), it is possible to manage common mallow through the use of preemergence herbicides. The spring and fall applications of preemergence applications, with a split application in the spring, will present good control. Postemergence herbicides can also be used to control common mallow. Glyphosate, paraquat, glufosinate, diquat, pelargonic acid, and others will provide adequate control. In turf, three way herbicides or products that contain triclopyr, fluroxypyr, and quinclorac as one of the ingredients in a two- or three-combination herbicide will also work. In warm-season turf, metsulfuron (Manor) can control common mallow when applied in combination with a non-ionic surfactant (0.25%).

Photos by Aaron Patton

Register Now for Indiana Green Expo- The Largest and Most Comprehensive Green Industry Educational Event in Indiana

(Kyle Daniel, daniel38@purdue.edu)

Registration is now open for a great deal on early-bird registration at the Indiana Green Expo. This event is Indiana's largest, most comprehensive green industry event of the year! Offering over 75 educational seminars *plus* a Spanish track, certification opportunities, in-depth workshops, numerous CEUs and CCHs to be earned, and a two-day trade show! You don't want to miss the 2020 Indiana Green Expo! Click here for more information and to register: http://indianagreenexpo.com/.

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Editor: Kyle Daniel | Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, 625 Agriculture Mall Dr., West Lafayette, IN 47907