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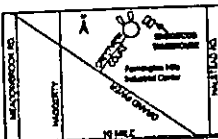
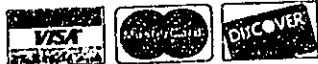
FRIDAY 24TH 10-9 SATURDAY 25TH 10-5 SUNDAY 26TH 12-5



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GARDEN SPOT

It's the time of year to think about trees



MARTY FIGLEY

This is a good time of year to consider a new tree for your gardens, and the silhouettes of these beauties could be a factor in your choice. Because the leaves have fallen, the lines of trees and shrubs are more clear than when the leaves are on the branches.

After your Thanksgiving feast your family might like to take a walk or a drive and look for some possibilities. Branch structures will give you a hint of the kind of tree you may see. For instance, ash, dogwood and maple trees have opposite branching while almost all other trees have alternate branching.

Bark patterns and bark colors will give other clues. Birches have slightly curly white trunks, sycamores have yellowish to brown coarse-grained bark. The bark colors of maples run from gray to dark brown, with textures smooth to scaly (most often on older trees). These rules aren't really rigid, but are good guidelines. There are others, such as the gray bark of the white ash, which is ridged.

A new plant is often just what a particular area needs to add that certain look to a garden. It might be a good idea to take a camera along on your quest and photograph the trees that appeal to you. With this visual record it will be much easier to identify the trees in the comfort of your home with a good book at hand.

"The Year in Trees: Superb Woody Plants for Four-season Gardens," Kim E. Tripp and J.C. Raulston (Timber Press, \$44.95), describes 160 "high quality woody landscape plants that deserve a chance in our gardens." Divided by seasons, the specific characteristics of each plant are highlighted for that time; excellent photos illustrate.

Don't let the format dissuade you from taking a good look at this book. The information is clear and straightforward. Although the authors studied the plants at North Carolina State University, many of them are suitable for most climate zones and have been grown in many of them. The focus is on "good, reliable garden plants."

Reminder

The Thanksgiving turkey will soon be just a memory and we've taken some time out to enjoy friends and family, but we must remember garden chores are always important to do at the proper time.

Something to do now is to spray an anti-transpirant on evergreen shrubs to help hold moisture in the plant and to prevent windburn. The temperature

needs to be above 40 degrees Fahrenheit when the solution is applied, then the spray should be repeated about mid-January or February, when we have our winter thaw. A note on the calendar will be a reminder.

While you're about it, spray the fresh evergreen awags, wreaths and Christmas tree with this product to prolong their freshness.

If the weather cooperates, you could also prune your deciduous trees and shrubs. With the leaves gone you can more easily see the branch forms. Remove branches that cross or grow up through the middle of the plant and any diseased or dead ones. Older stems of plants such as lilacs, forsythia, red stem dogwood and privet can also be removed to allow space for new growth next spring.

Many people use organic mulches for the winter. If you do, apply a 10-6-4 fertilizer prior to mulching to replace possible lost nitrogen.

Visit the Festival of Trees at Cobo Hall during this season. A delightful array of beautifully decorated trees awaits you. A Santaland will entrance the kiddies and a gift shop will help get those holiday gifts bought in record time.

Have a wonderful, peaceful Thanksgiving with your family and friends. Enjoy the bounty of the harvest and celebrate with a thankful heart.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859. Her fax number is (810) 644-1314.



MARTY FIGLEY

Limbering up: A tree, properly sited and pruned, can add a dramatic impact to the landscape.