

# Treeways

2016 – 1

## Big Piles of Brush -- a Fire Danger?

Clearing out large tangles of dead branches and dead trees is a positive way to make your property safer, more useable and beautiful. Lots of dead trees and brush near your home could be a fire hazard and removing deadwood from near your home will reduce danger in a wildfire situation. Consider the degree of deadwood/invasive species removal you may want or need to do. An impenetrable thicket of invasive buckthorn or honeysuckle can prevent accessing portions of your property but clearing out the entire shrubby understory is likely to increase annual upkeep. More lawn equals more mowing and is that what you really want to do?

Removing all the buckthorn, honeysuckle and the other invasive species creates an ideal opportunity for more invasives to reestablish since they are typically more aggressive than the native species associated with our woodlands. Plan to plant native understory shrubs/trees to help fill the void left after invasive species removal. Larger quantities of native trees and shrubs can be special ordered through the City Forester at bargain prices before Arbor Day.

Removing all the buckthorn and honeysuckle may make your home visible to the neighbors who you could never see through the “green curtain” of leaves. Before you begin it is a good idea to have a vision of what completing the invasive species cleanout will look like. The City Forester is available to help you sort through your options and will make recommendations if you prefer.

Chipping and composting are the preferred methods of organic debris disposal however permits to burn brush, wood, and leaves are often available. When winter snow is gone wildfire danger increases dramatically when last year’s dry grass and leaves become visible. Dry conditions in spring may require waiting for summer “green up” before open burning is available again.

Sunfish Lake follows the Minnesota DNR guidelines for open burning that are updated regularly. When you have your permit and you are planning a burn, it may still be too dry to actually light up your fire. It is your responsibility to do your burning in a safe and reasonable manner.

**Burning permits to burn brush are required if the fire will be larger than 3’ wide and 3’ high so this includes bonfires too.** A burning permit **does not allow** the burning of household garbage, painted wood, paper, treated wood, railroad ties, plastic, tires, or other non-organic materials. Garbage burning is now the largest source of deadly dioxins in the United States. Burning permits are available by contacting the City Forester, Jim Nayas, at 612-803-9033 for a fee of \$45.00 payable to the City.

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