

## 2016 STRATEGY TO SAVE MOUNT ROYAL COTONEASTER

The insect pest known as oyster shell scale has spread through the cotoneaster hedges and shrubs of Mount Royal at an alarming rate in the last two years. Like the elm tree scale that threatens Mount Royal's magnificent tree canopy, this insect, untreated, is fatal to the lovely hedges of our community. Because scale insects from an infested hedge spread to cotoneaster on nearby properties, we all need to work in concert to control this pest.

Mark Trozzo, a certified arborist (PR-4958A verifiable at isa-arbor.com), offers a site evaluation and quotation to any resident who contacts him stating "I am a resident of Mount Royal".

**Contact Trozzo Trees & Care Ltd. at 403-532-2500 or mark@trozzotreesandcare.com**

Vigilance and persistence are critical in the fight against oyster shell scale. If you have any infestation, it is unlikely to be fully eradicated in one season. After pruning down to 1-2 inch stumps to remove infested cotoneaster canes, spraying must be applied annually until the threat is gone from the environment. With milder winters, earlier springs and warmer fall weather, this maintenance regime may be required yearly to maintain healthy cotoneaster. Another consideration is nutrition. A healthy hedge is better able to fight the infestation. Many Mount Royal cotoneaster are old hedges in age-depleted soils. Lawn fertilizer (typically 30-0-0 or 45-0-0) is not sufficient. To be healthy, the hedges need a "complete" fertilizer with approximately equal parts of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, such as 8-8-8, 10-10-10, *etc.* If homeowners are not prepared to repeat maintenance or live near a reservoir of heavily infested hedges, complete removal of cotoneaster may be a better option. Replant with other attractive hedge plants like Nanking cherry. If you don't know if you have cotoneaster infestation, the MRCA Public Open Spaces Committee (POS) is happy to offer advice on the state of your plants, as time permits. You are welcome to contact valmcf@hotmail.com, waugh.james@gmail.com or charlene.prickett@gmail.com.

In an effort to provide guidance in best practices strategy to residents, POS interviewed knowledgeable certified arborists who have experience treating scale-infested cotoneaster. Finally, POS invited three commercial arborists to submit proposals to treat private property cotoneaster in Mount Royal with the promise of a preferred rate so that residents could benefit from a group buy which would allow the treatment of multiple properties in an economically efficient manner. The company benefits from having customers clustered in one community, saving the driving time, while the community benefits from a better than average rate from a company with experience in oyster shell scale treatment and a reputation to protect. POS has chosen to recommend Mark Trozzo, an experienced arborist who has had good results controlling oyster shell scale using the protocol outlined in this and previous MRCA sponsored articles on the issue. Under a discounted group rate, Trozzo Trees will quote on two options:

### OPTION 1, SAVE COTONEASTER

Phase 1. In winter, Trozzo Trees will prune infested cotoneaster canes to 1-2 inches above ground level and remove all infested debris (which can continue to spread infestation if left on site).

Phase 2. In spring when temperatures are optimum, a mixture of horticultural oil and lime sulphur will be sprayed on the cut stumps.

Phase 3. In early summer when local City of Calgary entomologist Jim Watts tells us that the microscopic eggs are hatching and scale insects are in the crawler stage, a second spray will be applied to kill insects on contact.

Phase 4 optional. Trozzo Trees will administer deep root fertilization to boost plant health and faster regrowth. Do it yourself homeowners may prefer to apply liquid or granular fertilizers following the 10-10-10 or 8-8-8 format mentioned above.

Pricing: Option 1 Save Cotoneaster, Phases 1-3 a large 100-foot long hedge is charged at about \$12 per foot. The optional deep root fertilization is an additional \$2 per foot.

### OPTION 2, REMOVE COTONEASTER

Phase 1. In winter, Trozzo Trees will prune infested cotoneaster to ground level and remove all debris.

Phase 2. Using a stump grinder machine, the cotoneaster roots will be completely removed and hauled away so the area can be replanted with other plant materials or sod.

Pricing: Option 2 Remove Cotoneaster, Phase 1 is \$8 per foot. Phase 2 is highly variable depending on the width of the hedge or shrub. Homeowners will be given a firm quote for Phase 2 at the initial site evaluation.

For all work, a certified arborist will be on site with two qualified / bondable / insured staff. Individual invoices will be mailed after the completion of each phase of work. All estimates will be thoroughly discussed in the initial on-site consultation following first contact with Trozzo Trees. Because Trozzo Trees will already be working in the community, no job is too small. Even if you just have one or two infested shrubs, they can be remediated or removed as part of this group project. Of course, there are other companies capable of providing this service, so use your best judgement, negotiate your best deal, but stand firm on the treatment protocol. **Please understand, there is no guarantee that we can save our cotoneaster, but if we don't try, we can predict the outcome with certainty — all the lovely cotoneaster hedges that give Mount Royal much of its present character will simply die out.**