

HOUSING

The
Portland
Observer

Regional power outage started by tree

The incredible influence possessed by a single tree should never be underestimated, say experts at the Bonneville Power Administration, so property owners who plant and prune trees near BPA power lines are being asked to help reduce outages in the area by

keeping trees safely distanced from lines.

A single tree is what started a widespread power outage that affected 2 million people in 14 western states on Tuesday, July 2. The outage occurred when electricity jumped from a

345,000-volt transmission line in Wyoming to a cottonwood that had grown too close to the line. This incident, combined with a number of unusual operating conditions, led to outages in many parts of the West.

In order to keep electricity flowing

reliably while maintaining low rates, the Bonneville Power Administration is asking people to help by ensuring that trees and other potential hazards are safely distanced from transmission lines.

"Trees don't have to cut off power to become a problem," said Darrel VanCoevering, BPA system operations manager. "In many cases, they can cause damage. That means we must replace or repair equipment - which winds up being more costly for electricity users."

Trees need not touch power lines to be dangerous. Lines often sag when carrying a lot of electricity or during hot weather. Electricity can jump from wires to nearby trees, causing wildfires or harm to people nearby. Plus, as the summer warming trend continues, it is highly likely that some lines will sag, increasing the chances for a dangerous hazard. This, coupled with the threat of widespread fires, could endanger the lives and property of thousands of people.

Safely growing trees and shrubs can make the difference between beautiful landscapes and safety hazards. To ensure your safety, only trained experts should remove trees that are close to transmission line.

Each year, trees that have fallen,

have been cut, or were improperly planted cause dozens of outages that affect electric utility customers and threaten public safety. In the past year, 18 percent of the tree-caused outages on the BPA power system in the region were the result of human action - either from trees being cut or from growing trees too close to the lines.

These tree-related power outages are more than just an inconvenience. Fire departments, police and hospitals are all dependent upon a reliable supply of electricity to be able to respond to emergencies. Additionally, individuals on life support devices also are threatened by these electrical outages, and there are many dangers and inconveniences caused by outages to traffic lights.

BPA has developed a "Danger Tree" program to promote transmission line safety and assist property owners with their responsibility to keep trees and vegetation a safe distance from power lines and equipment. The program offers property inspections and maintenance work to owners of property with potential power hazards along BPA high-voltage lines.

"Citizen involvement is essential for general electrical safety, and it's needed to make the Danger Tree program effective," says BPA transmission line manager Randy Melzer.

Stress-reliever

Summer can be a stressful time for trees in and around the home landscape, according to Ray McNeilan, home horticulturist with the Oregon State University Extension Service.

Many tree problems appearing in the summer are caused by something affecting the tree's root systems, said McNeilan.

A common cause of tree stress is the misuse of weed killers in lawns that are growing above the tree roots.

The root system of a tree spreads out in all directions from the trunk. The roots will develop in whatever direction they find growing room, good soil, moisture.

As the tree develops, the roots continue to expand outwards at a rate equal to or even greater than the top growth.

Tree roots may extend out from the trunk as far as the tree is tall, said McNeilan. The root system of a maple tree 30 feet high may reach as far as 30 feet away from the trunk.

This means that most nearby trees will have their roots underneath your lawn. Check carefully any weed killers used on the lawn to make sure they will not harm nearby trees.

Another problem is lack of soil moisture, especially during periods of hot weather.

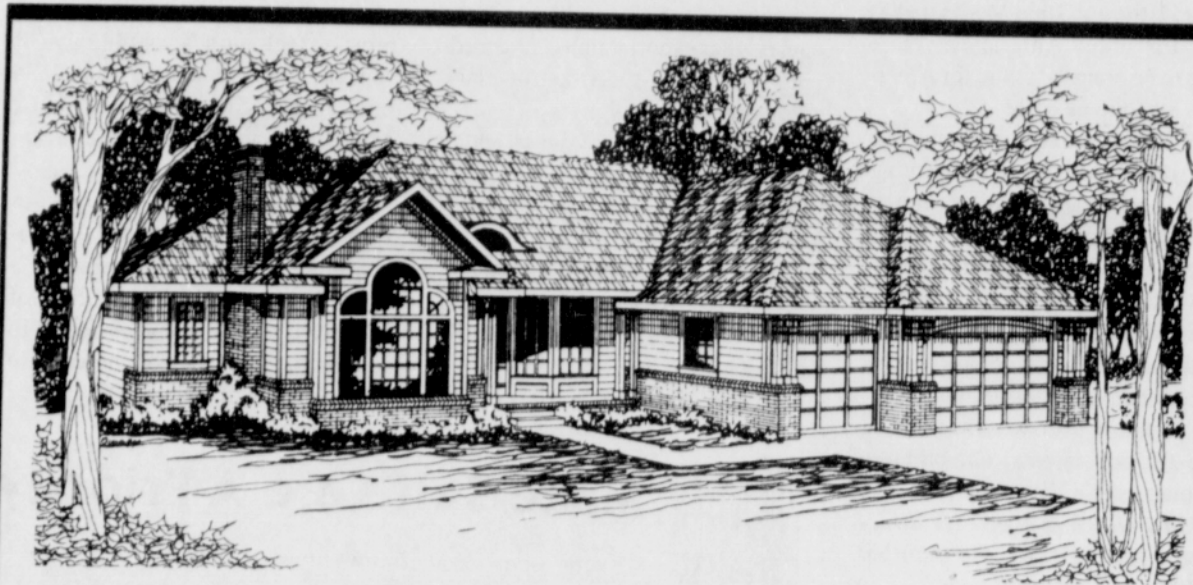
Unless irrigated periodically, young trees or trees planted this past spring will suffer from hot daytime temperatures.

Water young trees every month during their first year.

Apply enough water that it reaches and stimulates the roots that grow deep into the soil.

Hot summer temperatures also cause trees to show symptoms of problems that may have been present for many years, said McNeilan.

For example, a maple tree may have verticillium wilt, but not show many effects of the disease until the tree becomes stressed by high heat. In this case watering the tree doesn't remedy the real problem.



Arches add elegance to generous Jessica

By Associated Designs

Arched windows, double columns and a fetching eyebrow dormer draw the eye to the handsome Jessica. In this plan, good things come in threes. It has three bedrooms, a roomy three-car garage, and three spacious family living areas. All rooms that aren't vaulted have 10-foot ceilings.

You enter the home through a delightful barrel-vaulted entry brightened by sidelights and a flat transom. Higher up, a half-round transom

nestles under the eyebrow dormer you see outside. A plant shelf below the dormer takes advantage of the natural light.

Straight ahead, an arched opening frames an arched art niche, one of two in this hallway. The vaulted living room to the left has a fireplace flanked by bookshelves. An elegant tray-ceiling dining room is to the right.

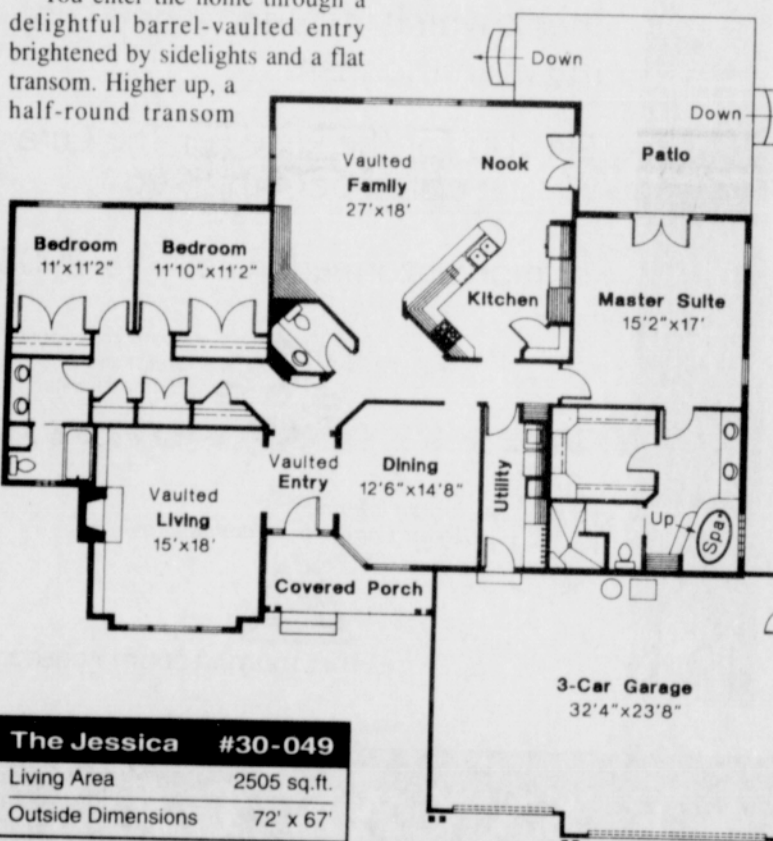
Windowed on three sides, the family room is the brightest and largest of the gathering spaces. An arched transom crowns the rear windows while double doors in the nook open onto a large patio. Overhead plant shelves and an extended eating bar define the boundary between kitchen and family room.

A step-in pantry adds storage space, and utilities are handy in a long utility room/mud room that connects to the garage. You can sit on the bench to remove muddy footwear, stow it underneath, and hang coats on the wall pegs above.

Amenities in the Jessica's master suite include a huge walk-in closet, an oval spa tub, double vanity, and plant shelves along two sides. A pocket door sections off the toilet and an oversized walk-in shower. Secondary bedrooms share another two-section bathroom at the end of a hallway lined with storage spaces.

For a review plan, including scaled floor plans, elevations, section and artist's conception, send \$15 to Associated Designs, 1100 Jacobs Dr., Eugene, Ore. 97402. Please specify the Jessica 30-049 and include a return address when ordering. A catalog featuring over 170 home plans is available for \$12. For more information call (800) 634-0123.

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Hardware retail utilizes computers

John Hechinger Jr. was showing off the kitchen and bath displays at his company's Home Quarters Warehouse in Manchester. Nearby, a designer worked at a computer as she listened to a customer explain her needs and desires.

The design advice is free, Hechinger said. Because HQ promises to match any competitor's price, he doesn't worry that the customer will come to his store for free help in designing a kitchen or bathroom and then buy the components elsewhere.

The increasing size of such display areas, the attention given to the presentation of lighting fixtures and the improvement in quantity and quality of area rugs for sale are all part of HQ's effort to focus on home fashion.

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Portland General Electric's Employees Seed the Future.

"Seed the Future" is a five year partnership with Friends of Trees to plant 144,000 trees and seedlings around Portland. Those trees will help beautify neighborhoods and purify our air. At PGE, we think a power company can do more than make a profit. It can make a difference.

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