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Missouri State U. uses micro-injections to nurse historic tree to health

by Chad Plein, KY3 News



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Story Published: Apr 16, 2010 at 6:23 PM CDT (Story Updated: Apr 17, 2010 at 11:14 PM CDT)

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. -- April is a busy month for green thumbs. You have National Garden month, Arbor Day and Earth Day.

"People need to know what it's worth; then people may take better care of it," Missouri State University Grounds Supervisor Guy DeVault said, talking about the value of a tree.

City and state arborists have looked at a 200-year-old copper beech tree on MSU's campus. One of the oldest trees in the city has a severe case of root rot.

"It's a fungus that's rotting away the root system," said Dean Alberty with of The Green Tree Company. "Eventually, you'll have no vascular system. The tree will die off and then die completely."

Alberty brought a present to MSU: free capsules of micro-injection medicine. They look like lemon lolly pops. These vials of medicine leak into the tree's veins. By nightfall, the medicine will be up in the canopy. Alberty hopes it will heal the root rot.

"It's an IV for a tree," Alberty said.

"You can't replace a tree like that," said MSU Assistant Director of Grounds Services John Clark. "Two hundred years is a long time; plant a new tree in its place, we'll never see it like that."

These 27 micro-injections keep the medicine inside the tree instead of spraying chemicals onto the leaves or dumping them into the ground.

"There are no fumes," Clark said, keeping students reading and relaxing under this iconic tree healthy.

"The longterm prognosis is very good," Alberty said.

The Green Company's partners, Lori and David Hayes, are MSU alums. Alberty says the couple are proud to donate the meds to keep the campus looking wonderful.

The micro-injection process can be done for younger trees. The capsules

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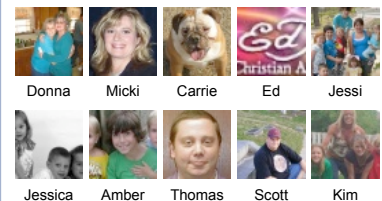
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