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*The Tree Care Experts*

## MISTLETOE

Mistletoe is a parasite that derives its nutrients and moisture from a host plant. Mistletoe infections, left to develop in a tree, reduce the tree's health over time and can lead to weakened areas in larger limbs potentially resulting in limb failure (breakage). Once the mistletoe plant matures, seeds are produced which spread throughout the tree's canopy, causing multiple new infection sites. Mistletoe management should be directed toward the removal of entire branches or twigs infected with mistletoe. When large limbs or limbs critical to the structure of the tree are infected, the mistletoe should be removed leaving the essential limbs. However, regrowth will occur throughout the year. On average, mistletoe removal will be necessary every two to three years as part of a regular tree maintenance program. This will address regrowth of old infections as well as new infections that will constantly occur on susceptible species.

North Central Texas has a number of susceptible species, many of which are growing in our residential landscapes. Cedar Elm is by far the most commonly infected tree species. Other susceptible trees include American Elm, Hackberry, Mulberry, Ash, and Bois d' Arc.

Mistletoe can be removed at anytime of the year. However, it is more visible during the dormant season, and in most cases more easily removed during this time of year.

## EXAMPLES OF MISTLETOE



*Courtesy of British Wild Flowers*

Mistletoe is a parasite that remains evergreen. It's nearly translucent white berries ripen after the yellow flowers bloom from fall into winter.

Mistletoe is most commonly transported by birds after they have ingested the berries and roosted in a tree. Here are two examples of what mistletoe can look like in your tree from a distance.

The best opportunity to remove mistletoe is in the fall when it is most visible.



Contact your Arborist for mistletoe removal recommendations.

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