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Can you stop trees from producing acorns?

This time of year, many people get frustrated with the number of acorns (or other seeds) that their shade trees produce. Sometimes people ask if there is a way to stop trees from producing seeds and avoid the headache.

The short answer is no. There are, in theory, products that can make acorns abort before they enlarge, but the timing is critical and very difficult to achieve with consistency. The efficacy of these products will also vary from one species to another since the fruiting habit differs. These products can be costly, and even if properly applied, do not always work correctly. This means that preventing seeds on your shade trees is not feasible for homeowners.

The best way to avoid the issue is to pay careful attention to the details of plant growth and fruiting habits during the selection phase of landscaping. Choose trees and place them appropriately in the landscape to avoid these issues.

If you do have nuisance seeds from your trees, rest assured, cleaning up all the acorns in the lawn and landscape is not a required task. Squirrels and other animals will usually do the job for you. There are tools available to assist with gathering acorns such as a garden rake and lawn vacuum. For riding mowers, you can get sweeper attachments that will pick up acorns and other yard debris without harming your grass. The approach each gardener takes will vary.