Good afternoon ... and thanks for joining us ... I'm Judy Simpson. This is the cold and flu season – and the most important means of preventing the spread of infection is hand-washing. For young schoolchildren, UVM Extension has developed an interactive exhibit that teaches about the spread of germs. In our first segment today, Rebecca Gollin tells us about “Germ City”:

Karen Schneider (nats) some germs make us sick anybody get sick this winter?

Students at the Metawee Community School in West Pawlet recently learned an important lesson about germs.

Finley Mayer - 1st grade
they can make you sick and you can sometimes get them from other people

Jack Thrasher 2nd grade
I learned that there can be germs, germs spread very quickly, like I had put the germs here, but they spread up here sort of

Rowan Russell kindergarten
.if you touch your eyes, mouth or nose, and if you touch your mouth they could probably crawl into your mouth and you could probably get sick.

The school is hosting Germ City, an interactive exhibit that educates visitors about the importance of hand washing.

Schneider - it’s the single thing you can do that reduces transferring infections and bacteria and viruses, and it’s something that’s really quite easy to do

Karen Schneider and Sally Cleveland from the University of Vermont Extension program are running Germ City today.

Karen Schneider - UVM Extension what we have done is set up a really easy system for schools and any other organization that would like it in their town, to contact us at the Extension Office in Rutland, and Sally will schedule it for you, and what we do, is pack it up
and send it to you there are very easy directions of putting it up it looks complicated but it's really not. It pops up and then we have the lesson plans all ready to go

Nancy Mark, Principal, Matawee School It fits in very well with our health curriculum, because our school nurse has been teaching about careful hand washing

Nancy Mark, the principal of Metawee attributes the low rates of illness at the school this winter to an emphasis on healthy habits, especially proper hand washing.

Sophia Vickery 1st grade you wet your hands with water, then get soap on your hands, and rub for 20 seconds then you rinse your hands then you dry your hands with a towel

Thomas Dunbar 2nd grade wash your hands and scrub about 20 seconds you use soap and scrub all over, in between your fingers and in your fingernails

Schneider the kids know the right answers, they know how long to wash their hands, and that you need soap and running water and that kind of thing, but it's not until they actually go through the process and see their hands in there again, and go, oh, I didn't I know the information, but seeing the results is very very powerful. And it sort of this a-ha moment for them.

Mandy Mayer School nurse When kids are learning healthy habits it's really more effective when they can do it when they can actually see how it works, and I think with the germ city program, they are able to actually see how the germs are sticking to their hands, rather than a teacher saying well, you can’t really see germs, but they are there but if they’re actually seeing it, I think that they will learn the behaviors faster, and they'll retain the skills in the future.

Nats Karen - do you know that there’s one thing we can do to get rid of this guy?

After talking to Schneider about how germs spread, and proper hand washing, the students are given a special lotion that simulates germs. The lotion appears colorless, but inside Germ City, blue lights reveal where the fake germs are.

Nats, kids screaming inside germ city (kid hey, my shirt’s glowing! Karen can you see germs on your hands? kids yeah!)

The group then heads to a nearby sink to practice their hand washing. (nats, hand washing) and then back into Germ City to see how well they did.

Nats Karen - how did you do? little boy not very good

Willow Hughes-Muse kindergarten
I saw a little on my wrist and some on the top of my hand

Tristan Hyatt kindergarten
There was fake germs on our hands, and then when we washed our hands, it was only a little bit on your hands.

Gretchen Hammell 2nd grade
Well, I did rub the cream up there a little, but I think, like they scooched somehow
Rowan Russell I just went like this, and then I went up here, but there was still some up here

Finley Mayer - it was pretty cool because you got to see germs on your hands that were like white

Mark we also have the hand sanitizers around the school, and we also have them in places just to remind people about hand washing but we also have sinks in every classroom

Mark and her colleagues at Mettawee School hope the students will continue to practice the healthy habits they are learning today.

Mayer Kids do need to learn it when they’re little, if we can get children to develop habits when they’re young, those habits are more likely to transfer when they get older. It’s empowering for them

Judging from the student’s response, today's lesson clearly made an impact.

Thomas Dunbar (me what are you going to do next time you wash your hands) rub a little harder on the soap and make sure all the germs come off

Jack thrasher - you have to wash your hands very very well in places that you don’t think germs would usually be like under your fingernails and your wrist and a little bit up behind your wrist. I think next time I should use hot water instead of cold water

Gretchen Hammell I think I should just rub my fingernails more so I can get the germs off it, and I should rub more up here on my wrist.

Rowan Russell - you should wash them every time you’re about to have dinner, lunch and breakfast, and when you go to the bathroom, you should wash them after too.

Finley Mayer - if you eat, after you play with your dogs or cats because they might have like a germ

Promoting education and healthy communities around Vermont, UVM extension and Germ city have a lesson for Vermonters of all ages.

Tristan Hyatt you wash your hands!

In West Pawlet, I'm Rebecca Gollin with Across the Fence.

Germ City is available for schools and to your community, call 1-800-281-6977 ... that’s 800-281-6977, or e-mail Sally Cleveland at u-v-m dot e-d-u.

[Judy] Our next segment involves practical advice for your own yard. This is the time of year that you can be pruning your trees. To get things straight, and take the guesswork out of pruning, Across the Fence’s Keith Silva joined two professionals in the city of Burlington.

UVM extension urban forester Kate Forrer and city of Burlington arborist Andrew Noonan are at Lakeview Cemetery in Burlington. Pruning season starts one growing season ends.
Wintertime is an excellent time to prune you don't have the foliage on the trees you can really see the structure so if you need to train you really don't have anything blocking the view of what the structure would look like.

Before making that first cut arborists advise homeowners consider what when and how. What pruning means planning having a plan for what needs to be cut now and what can wait until another time is crucial to a tree as health and beauty. When timing is essential for pruning shade trees can be pruned in the winter but spring flowering shrubs like lilac or dogwood should be pruned only after blooming. How always prune above the branch bark collar this will allow the tree to properly heal.

I'm going to take this branch out and cut that part off first and get that out of the way and then I have this stub here

so Andrew I see that you took the stub out why did you do that?

By bringing it back to the branch collar you can see this little ridge year and that is the branch bark collar by cutting back to that and not into it it has a better chance to heal over being a young tree it will probably only take two years.

Here is a great example of what Andrew was talking about in terms of the tree being able to seal off the wound. This is an old branch cut here that was made possibly when the tree was in the nursery or when it was really small. Trees do not feel like we heal when they have the will to they actually seal or compartmentalize that wound so it is really important to keep that branch collar intact.

From the Maple Forrer and Noonan site by Japanese tree lilac.

Andrew people have all sorts of trees in their yards and this seems to be a great example of the tree that does not have a center lead or system is there anything different that you would do with this tree?

Well this is an ornamental is a Japanese tree lilac and they do very well in Vermont. It doesn't have a central lead it's got more of a vase shape and one thing I've noticed right off is that this branch right here you can see is rubbing up against this other branch and as both pieces grow it's going to push on this site here and it could potentially break it off. I'm using my hands saw again. Anytime you can be where you can hold onto and its chest level it's good to have a hands saw you have more control and this is going to be a little bit more tougher here because I've got to get in behind. I'm holding the stub so that when I get near the end I'll slow down just a little bit and that way I don't rip the bark and once again we cut it so that it has that bark collar and I stated just to the outside of that so that it will have a smaller surface area to heal over.

Actually there is a really good example from a previous cut from several years ago that is healing over. This right here is calloused tissue and in probably another year or two that will keep growing and it will be sealed up.

As I like to tell homeowners you always want to look for that doughnuts type of ring around the old cuts. That's a great sign that the tree is able to develop that callous would and will seal off that wound.

Kate I have a question for you do you know what is growing all over the trunk of this tree?
Yes sure Andrew this is lichen is totally healthy. Often different types of lichen and moss is grow on tree bark and sometimes it's a good indicator of good air quality. It's totally harmless we see it all over trees in the forest and even in the city in here in Burlington and homeowners should not be worried about it.

From the nonthreatening lichen Forrer and Noonan find that the same cannot be said for this young elm.

So we have seen some pretty good examples of simple things that homeowners can do when they go out to prune their trees with the sugar maple or the Japanese tree lilac but boy Andrew this tree is a mess.

Yes it's about the same age as the sugar maple but it is an elm so it is a faster grower. It's got quite a good size to it for being a young tree. It has got a few issues it has something needs to be done and also one or two little struck troll things but it's mainly kind of raising it up and thinning it. So I'm going to do on a bigger branch of the three cut method so my first cut is underneath then my next cut is out and beyond it so that when you cut and the branch comes down it breaks free and by doing the cut underneath it prevents the bark from ripping out. That's 1 2 and then my third cut is to make the final cut I'm locating the bark branch collar here I found it. I'm going to start with taking some of these lower branches off first.

To thin it out a little bit is that what you are thinking?

To just raise it up first because I want to keep in mind that I don't want to take more than 25% of the full off. If you notice Kate this tree is in a fairly open spot. Do you wonder why we put it here? Because is going to be a large tree when it's mature it can be 5060 foot tall so you want in an area that has plenty of space for it to mature and have what it's going to be its best form. A homeowner wouldn't want to put this 5 feet off their porch because it's going to grow all over your house.

That brings up another great thing Andrew just some of the reasons that we prune and making sure that trees are not conflicting with some of our infrastructure like our houses. There's a lot of different safety and aesthetic reasons as well as health reasons.

Another thing to his utility wires when we plant trees on the streets here in Burlington we make sure that we plant short growing species if it's going to be underneath the telephone and power lines.

You need to be thinking as you're proving not only about the cuts you're going to make this year but also which are going to do next year or the year after.

In Burlington I am Keith Silva with Across the Fence.

[Judy] Thank you, Keith ... and thank you for joining us. That's our program for today. I'm Judy Simpson ... I'll see you again next time on Across the Fence.

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