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WINTER INJURY TO PLANTINGS APPARENT NOW

The severity of the weather this winter along, with the lack of moisture last fall has resulted in injury to some plants. Following several years of relatively mild winters the intense cold, and the unusual winds have been particularly damaging according to James A. Fizzell, University of Illinois Horticulturist in Cook County.

What to do for Winter Damaged Evergreens

Evergreens and yews suffered greatly this winter. Young growth was frozen, dried, and killed by the high winds and sub zero temperatures.

This damage can be seen now, but will become more evident later this spring.

Don't attempt to prune away this damage early. Allow the plant to make as much new growth as possible. Then do your corrective and regular maintenance pruning in early July or after new growth matures.

A light fertilization with a high nitrogen fertilizer such as one with an analysis of 10-6-4 for N, P and K in late March or early April will help stimulate new growth.

Other plants that will show damage are the broadleaf evergreens such as the Hollies, Azaleas and Rhododenrons. The damage will look like burned areas on the leaf, and twigs that have died. Allow new growth to start before pruning away dead wood on such broadleaf evergreens.

Junipers also have been damaged, but their injury will look different. Andorra and Meyer Junipers will probably be the most affected. The injury will appear as small dead tufts of foliage throughout the plant. Early it may appear yellow and then turn brown in late spring or early summer. This damage can be helped with fertilization and watering if the soil is dry. If there are large areas of dead material prune it out early in July.

Split Tree Trunks

Extreme cold temperatures have caused many tree trunks to split, says Fizzell. Sycamore, Tulip Poplar, and Locust have been most seriously and frequently affected.

If you have a tree that has split, wait until warmer weather before attempting to repair it. If the tree is young and growing rapidly, it will probably heal itself, says Fizzell. But if the tree is severely damaged or is a mature tree, the trunk may need to be bolted together. Use one-half inch diameter all-thread bolts. All-thread is a completely threaded rod which will accept a nut and washer for tightening from each end. Remove any dead or damaged bark along the split. When the split is closed be sure the surface is clean and smooth to promote quick healing. A sharp wood chisel can be used to smooth the surface and clean away damaged bark. If a large wound is left, Fizzell recommends covering it with a tree wound dressing. The tree will repair itself in one or two growing seasons, Fizzell concludes.

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