

Lightning and Trees-

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by lightning has been stressed severely. The intense heat of the strike takes a great deal of energy from the tree. To deal with stress, trees need additional nutrients. Studies have indicated that additional water after a strike may assist the tree in absorbing many nutrients from the soil.

Preventing insect and disease problems also may help reduce future stresses, but painting the lightning crack with wound paint is not a recommended practice, in fact it may worsen the situation by providing a conducive environment for harboring insects and disease-causing organisms.

To prevent lightning damage to special trees in your yard or community, a lightning protection system may be installed. This is accomplished by attaching a series of copper cables to the tree's highest branches and then grounding them a safe distance from the tree. If lightning strikes the tree, the current flows down the cables and safely to ground. If interested in a lightning protection system, consult with an arborist.



Lightning damage to a tree by the 5th hole at Hazeltine National Golf Club.

When a Tree Is Struck By Lightning

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North Oaks Golf Club

When a tree is struck by lightning, the liquids inside the trunk and bark turn to gas instantly, leading to high pressure and literally explosion of anything that is between the gas and the open air.

Usually, the lightning current runs just underneath the bark, down to ground, and the tree is scarred by a strip of blown-away bark. It usually survives such a strike.

Sometimes, the current may run down near the center of the trunk, and then there may be little left of the tree afterwards. Lesson to learn...don't seek a tree for protection from lightning!

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