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### **Winter damage to trees**

Do you have tree branches, or even entire trees, that have failed to branch out? You are not alone! Our January cold snap caused some significant damage to some trees.

Winter damage happens mainly as a result of extreme temperature. Trees can acclimate to warmer weather, and when it is followed by a quick drop in temperature, the trees might not be ready. In early January we saw warm temperatures reaching 30 and even 40 degrees F. Then, mid-January saw a quick shift, with negative-degree weather for multiple days in a row.

Because our deciduous trees do not have leaves on them in the winter, we don't know that this winter damage has occurred until they fail to leaf out in the spring. Some trees that suffered winter damage may fail to leaf out entirely. Other times only parts of the tree are damaged. Unfortunately, there's not anything you can do to bring back these branches after they've suffered winter damage. The best course of action is to prune those branches or in severe cases remove the tree.

Interestingly Evergreens, since they retain green foliage throughout the winter, can be more vulnerable. The dry winds that often accompany cold winters pull moisture out of their foliage. If the ground is frozen, the roots are not able to take up water to replace that lost moisture, causing foliage to die back.

The first step in preventing this issue is selecting trees that can withstand our average weather. But even trees adapted to our climate can still suffer winter damage in certain situations.

While there is not much we can do in the winter, we can help set our trees up for success in the fall by ensuring they have plenty of water. For trees under 3 years old, aim for two inches of water per week in November. Trees older than 3 years, aim for one inch of water per week. This can be from irrigation or rainfall. Continue watering until the ground freezes.

When watering trees it's best to water slowly and deeply. Using a soaker hose is one of the best ways to do this. You don't want to water only at the base of the tree, but make sure you spread your soaker hose out underneath where the branches reach.

If you are concerned about your tree or unsure if your tree has winter damage, reach out to our office for more guidance!