

home and garden

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Practical Tips To Help Your Trees Survive The Winter Chill

By Michael Gaines

East Hampton - As the end of fall approaches it is important to ensure that trees are prepared for the winter season. The most important aspect to consider is safety. Winter storms can cause branches and trees to fall resulting in both human injury and property damage.

Now is the time to begin pruning for winter and set structural and shaping goals for the trees on your property. You can relieve common concerns, such as interference with wires or gutters, walkways and driveways. I am dedicated to the importance of trees, not only for the beauty they add to landscaping, but as a critical natural resource, and environmental conservation starts with education, so here are a few tips to remember:

What Homeowners Should Do

- Water young trees to help them survive if temperatures permit. Winter droughts require watering as much as summer droughts. Water only when the soil and trees are cool, not frozen.
- Place composted organic mulch under trees in autumn or early winter to help retain water and reduce temperature extremes. A thin layer can act as a blanket and provide extra protection for roots. Make your own mulch by running over fallen leaves with a lawn mower.
- Look for any storm damage to trees and shrubs throughout the winter. Shake snow-laden branches to prevent damage.
- No matter the season, be patient with trees. There is no quick fix for Mother Nature.



Tree in Northwest Woods showing a fungus to watch out for. Images courtesy of WordHampton

When To Call A Professional

- Always make sure a competent and certified arborist is engaged to make recommendations and correct any unsafe situations. The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) provides a list of qualified people and companies to help home owners find a qualified person at www.treesaregood.org.
- Look for any fungal activity on trees and if you see any mushrooms growing call a professional immediately.
- Fall and winter present opportune times to address the form and structure of most ornamental landscape trees and especially unruly evergreen hedges/privacy screens, such as those



Working crew from CW Arborist - know when to use professionals.

of white pine, Leyland cypress, and hemlock. Professionals will limit pruning to deadwood and poorly placed branches in order to save as many living branches as possible.

- Identify and prune structurally weak trees in order to avoid injury from fallen branches, particularly during storms. Some branches may need simple support cables to help support the weight of winter snow.

Remember, tree care requires year-round dedication and replenishing neglected trees to full health can take time and patience is key.

For more information contact Michael Gaines at CW Arborists, Ltd., www.cwarborists.com.

• Michael Gaines is founder and president of CW Arborists, Ltd. (located in East Hampton). For more information go to www.cwarborists.com

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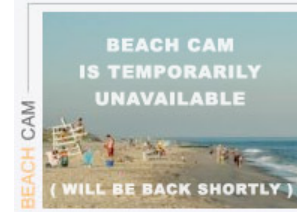
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