



## CMS Landscaping Plant Health Care Update

Ryan's Remarks:

Spring is finally upon us (except for those pesky lingering snowstorms and freezing temperatures at night). With this time of year comes great anticipation for flowers, green grass and warmer days, to be enjoyed outside.

It has been a long and fluctuating winter, from deep-freezing temperatures in the beginning of January to a stretch of 60-70-degree days in February and back to a consistent cold through much of March and April.

With the harsh winter and current conditions, I am seeing on landscapes, I wanted to discuss evergreen trees and shrubs in general in this update. The weather patterns of the winter made winter burn and winter kill very prevalent injuries throughout the landscape. Signs of winter burn are orange colors of needles on conifers and yellow-orange discoloration of leaves on broadleaf evergreens. The buds are typically not affected and will generate new spring growth. Winter kill can also affect leaves, needles, twigs, and in severe cases, entire parts of tree canopies, which will die back and not recover.

This spring, after such a hard winter for evergreens, the damage that occurred can be a precursor that leads to further infection from disease and insect issues. These issues typically attack stressed plants in the landscape first and can create a spiral of decline in plants where they continue looking worse and worse until they succumb to these multiple factors that will lead to their demise. I have already seen some very concerning signs on a variety of species in landscapes around the Holyoke area.

Helping these trees and shrubs recover from winter injury is very important and there are some key steps you can take to make sure important plants rebound from a tough winter, instead of continuing to decline.

- Make sure your plants have enough water now that the ground is thawed out. Hopefully mother nature helps, but if we go stretches without rain help you plants out.
- Only water the ground where the roots are, avoid getting water on the foliage as that will help spread disease.
- Fertilize your plants with an appropriate fertilizer and bio-stimulant to promote growth and injury recovery
- Do a spring cleanup around trees and shrubs to remove debris such as leaves and pruning visibly dead branches to promote air flow in the canopies.
- **AVOID PRUNING ANY LIVE BRANCHES ON STRESSED TREES**
- Apply fungicides as a preventative measure on species susceptible to common disease issues.

Don't have a green thumb? Not sure of the appropriate steps to help your plants thrive? Call CMS Landscaping and ask about a Plant Health Care program. We are here to help and can implement many of these steps for you to manage your landscape health and protect the investment you have in your trees and shrubs.