

The Hoe Truth Newsletter

Helping You Dig Up Gardening Ideas

HORTICULTURE

Cooperative Extension Service

Washington County
211 Progress Avenue
Springfield KY 40069
(859) 336-7741
Fax: (859) 336-7445
www.ca.uky.edu/ces/washington/

Correcting Ice Damaged Trees!!!

Now that the ice has done its damage, the power is coming back on, and the cleanup has begun we need to keep in mind how to best deal with our

trees who basically took the brunt of the storm. All trees species were damaged however there were almost universal failure for ornamental pears.

These trees are beautiful

but no longer worthy of planting, I have a feeling they will slowly disappear from yards as they die and people plant new stronger species.

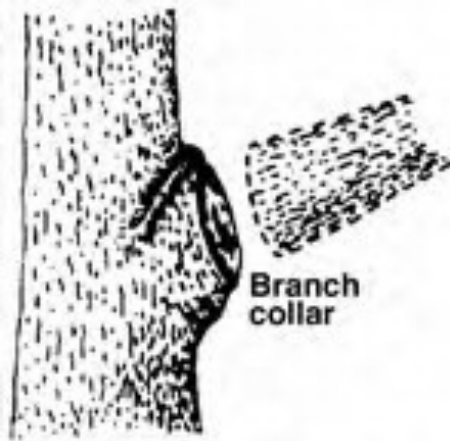
Pruning trees is difficult and time consuming if done right. In the old days people just topped them thinking that would reduce damage if they fell and they would be safer, however topping is awful for the tree and starts a slow dying and rotting process. The limbs that re-grow after topping are weak and as you may

have noticed from the wind and ice storms of late they are the first to fail. So, don't top trees, even those damaged by the ice storm.

If you are going to try to save the trees after this massive ice storm you need to keep in mind that a branch that is broken should be taken back to the branch its connected to even if the branch has broken free. This will allow for proper healing and limit the

amount of water suckers (new fast growing weak branches) and will give a better appearance and in time give you a stronger healthier tree. Sometime this can only be done with a bucket truck so wait to clean the canopy of the tree up when you have someone with this access. Leaving a stub whether broken from an ice storm or cut with a chain saw is bad!

If you look at the overall tree canopy and its apparent that the canopy is going to be



Pruning cuts should be made just outside the branch collar.



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one sided or more than a third of the top is missing you probably will be better off taking the entire tree out. Trees that have no chance of recovery are only going to give you problems in the future. The next wind storm or ice storm may not come for five years but you can believe when it does there is going to be a massive amount of limbs coming out of that tree. Over time as well rot and decay will filter down into the trunk and the tree could fail without warning crashing down on people and

Correcting Ice Damaged Trees

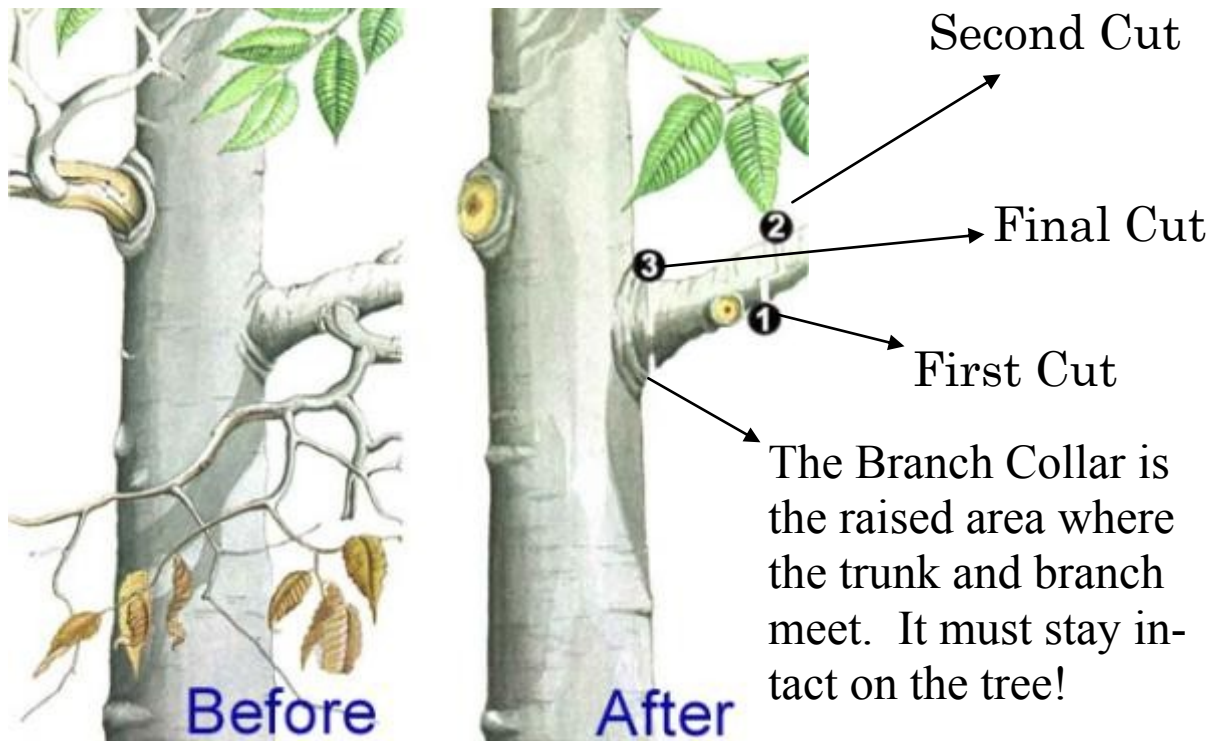
property below. So, do yourself a favor and take the tree out now and replace it with stronger more desirable trees.

Take a look at the pictures in this article for correct pruning and where a branch collar is located. The proper cuts can make all the difference in saving your trees. Never flush cut to the trunk and never

leave a stub. Cut to the branch collar but leave it intact. This will speed the healing process and discourage rot. Also, don't treat any wound on trees with products that are said to be for that. Most times these prod-

ucts seal in moisture and simply encourage rot. Trees have natural defenses and healing routines that they have been doing for millions of years and we need to let them heal themselves. The sap that you see running from tree wounds is actually removing bacteria and rotting agents from wounds as well as sealing it. It's kind of

like when we get cut, the blood washes out taking bacteria away from the sight, then it clots and seals it. Be careful if you are pruning trees, especially large ones. Falling branches can cause serious damage to property and you!



Horticulture Calendar For February

February 4, 2009 Annie's Project in Nelson County

February 11, 2009 District staff so I will be out of the office most of the day.

February 11, 2009 Annie's Project in Marion County

February 16, 2009 Lincoln Trail Beekeeper's Association at the St. Rose Parish Hall at 6:00 P.M.

February 18, 2009 Annie's Project in Marion County

February 20, 2009 Horticulture Council meeting at the Extension Office from Noon until 1:00 P.M., lunch is provided. If you can't attend let me know.

February 25, 2009 Annie's Project in Nelson County.

Important Dates:

February 12, Lincoln's Birthday

February 14, Valentines Day

February 16, President's Day

February 22, Washington's Birthday

February 24, Flag Day

February 25, Ash Wednesday



Plant Of The Month-Snow Crocus

No early spring garden is complete without a display of snow crocus flowers included in the design. Snow crocuses are usually one of the first of the spring flowers to show their pretty faces after a long cold winter. In cold climates they are known to pop up in snow-covered gardens, giving all who see them the heads up that spring is finally on its way.

These small flowers, usually only growing three to four inches tall, pack a big punch in the early spring landscape with their bright yellow, white, or lavender-blue urn-shaped blossoms and spiky green leaves. The snow crocus flower has six oval petals that grow from the stem in an upward direction. Although their flowers are much smaller than their cousins, the Giant Dutch crocus, snow crocuses produce more flowers per corm (bulb) and show themselves about

two weeks sooner making them a very desirable addition to the early spring garden.

They are cold hardy in zones 4 through 8 of the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map and are extremely disease and insect resistant.

Be aware that squirrels love to munch on them though so be sure to keep an eye

out for them. A top layer of mulch can help to hide your precious snow crocus corms from these predators.

Snow Crocuses grow from a bulb-like corm, which is actually a stem. The original corm will produce new corms during the growing season and then die off. These new corms can be dug up and replanted in each following year assuring you of always having more and

more beautiful snow crocuses in the years to come.

Plant snow crocus corms (bulbs) in the fall for a spring bloom. Choose a sunny or lightly shaded location. Plant your corms with 2 inches of



rich soil over their heads. A bit of overcrowding won't harm them but be careful not to plant your snow crocus corms too close together as they will multiply quickly within a couple of years.

ple of years.

Snow crocuses look wonderful planted singly or in mass plantings, under trees, as borders for rock gardens and flower beds, and can even be used to paint designs, pictures or words in your garden or throughout your lawn. Their pretty blooms and leaves are usually long gone before the first mowing of the season is necessary.

A Note From Dennis

The ice storm of 2009 has not been fun! I can't complain because I only lost electricity for a couple days, but I did lose water for a day or so too. I can assure you that losing water is worse than losing electricity. I am glad I had a way to heat the house though.

I hope you all have everything back up by now and if you don't I pray it will be soon. Events like this just let us know that things can go from good to very bad quickly. I never understood how it got so bad in New Orleans a few years back but comparing the damage to houses and the flooding and heat to our disaster is like comparing apples and oranges but it gives me some perspective of how fragile our lifestyles in this country really are. We are the most blessed country in the world!

On a lighter note. Pay special attention to your trees, they are going to need careful pruning if you are going to get them back in shape. Many of us, (including me) are sentimental about particular trees but cutting them to the ground is the best option if the damage is bad.

I have included the "wheelbarrow" information in this newsletter and there are still openings so call soon if you would like to attend. For those that have lost their jobs let me know and we will work something out if you would like to attend and can't afford it right now. Stay safe and warm!

Dennis Meyer

To-Do's For February

Trees And Shrubs

February is a good time to prune trees and shrubs as well as fertilize them. I guess the ice storm hit at the right time! If you aren't sure what your soil needs it is always a good idea to have a soil test done. It only costs \$5.00 and it will save you time and money in the long run.

One note of caution on pruning, if the tree or shrub is an ornamental and blooms in the spring don't prune it until after it blooms. Fruit trees should be pruned now through the beginning of March. You should however, prune damaged limbs on any plant.

Now is also a good time to force branches of flowering trees and shrubs indoors. Several varieties such as flowering quince, dogwood, forsythia, star magnolia, crabapple, flowering cherry, and pussy willow are all good candidates for forcing.

Don't fertilize trees and shrubs now even if they have damage. November and December are the best months to do this.

Vegetables

If you are growing your own vegetable transplants in window seals or under lights remember as a general rule it takes about six weeks for a good sized transplant to grow. This means you can start broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, Chinese cabbage, and other cool season garden plants in mid February. These will be planted in the garden in late March.

Again, take a soil sample now for your vegetable garden. This will keep your fertilizer bill down and your plants healthy.

If you haven't ordered your vegetable seeds yet go ahead and do it so you will get them in plenty of time for spring.

Lawn

If your lawn needs lime it can be applied now or anytime. You don't need lime on a lawn unless the pH is below 6.0.

Don't apply nitrogen now. Wait until October, November, or December. Nitrogen applications in the spring will force your grass to grow succulently and quickly causing more frequent mowing and weak shallow rooted turf which will be more susceptible to drought.

Apply phosphorus and potassium anytime of the year as your soil test indicates.

Mid February and March are the times to sow new lawns or over seed old ones. September is the best time but now is the second best.

Pre-emergent control herbicides can be applied in late February and March. This will help control annual weeds. A second application may be needed in late May or June for good crabgrass control.

Recipe Of The Month-Potato and Barley Soup

8 oz pearl barley
2 onions
4 potatoes
1/2 tsp thyme
1 tsp finely chopped parsley
1 quarts water
1 quart beef stock
1 cup milk or half and half
1 oz butter

Dice the onion and add it with the barley to the water and stock and bring it to a boil and simmer for two hours. Add the potatoes (sliced), thyme, parsley, and butter and simmer for another hour or until the potatoes and barley are cooked. Beef or left over pot roast can be added to make this a hardy winter meal. A clove or two of garlic will add another dimension to this soup as well.

