



## What to do about the Effects of Winter

**Water logged areas of your garden** – Wait until after the soil has adequately dried out in late Spring to work in your garden and to mulch with compost. Walking on wet soil will adversely compact it and mulching before it has sufficiently dried out will trap moisture in the crowns of perennials and grasses. We expect to lose a few perennials to this unavoidable condition. Take note of any saturated areas in your garden and consider installing a rain garden with plants that can tolerate wet feet. Next year, think about where you will dump any excess snow when shoveling and avoid these water-saturated areas.

**Deer and rabbit damage** – Check your shrubs and evergreens for the tell-tale sign of winter browsing by deer and rabbits – 45 degree angle cuts near the base of a plant. Sometimes corrective pruning can re-establish a plant's attractive habit, but it may take a couple of years of attentive pruning to fully recover. In other cases, the damage may be too great and the plant will need to be replaced. Once plants begin to grow in spring, also look for signs of deer and rabbits nibbling on the emerging buds and shoots of your shrubs and perennials. After a cold winter with lots of snow coverage, these critters will be hungry. Protect any plants immediately that show signs of damage by installing a wire cage if possible or spraying repellent.

**Vertical cracks on the South side of tree trunks** – The rise and fall of temperatures during the winter months can cause a trunk to split wide open. There's nothing that you can do to repair it, but thankfully, it's not always fatal to a tree and often times, the tree will heal itself. Do make sure to take care of the tree in subsequent years, providing adequate moisture and fertilization to help it survive.

**Winter burn on evergreens** – In late winter or early spring, you may see brown or scorched tips on your evergreens. During the winter, bright sunlight and strong winds dry needles and broad-leaf foliage out. Because the stems and roots of evergreens are frozen, water is unavailable to replenish the loss of moisture. Rapid drops in temperature after a warm sunny day can also cause further injury to the plant. In future years, applying an anti-transpirant, also called anti-desiccant in early and mid-winter, can help to reduce transpiration and minimize damage to the foliage. This spring, as your evergreens break their dormancy, lightly prune branch tips to improve their appearance and encourage new growth.

**Broken branches on trees and shrubs** – Damaged by heavy snow load, ice or wind, branches need to be properly trimmed. Refer to [\(link to come\)](#) for more information on pruning or call an arborist if necessary.

**Plants do not bud out in Spring** – Monitor plants as temperatures begin to rise. We anticipate that with the extreme cold and high winds of this winter that some plants will not survive. Cold injury will vary by plant – species, age and general health – as well as site location and soil conditions. We're keeping our eyes on Japanese maples and butterfly bushes in particular. Our fingers are crossed that the ample snow coverage will have

