

Cross Pollination



Treating Winter Damaged Trees

by Doris Calder

This past winter brought ice, wind and more snow than we've had in many years. In December many trees in Southern Ontario were damaged and took down power with them. The good news is that many trees are resilient and can withstand wind or ice damage, especially with some knowledgeable remedial care.

Trees should be assessed according to species and severity of damage. Minor damage can be dealt with right away, however major issues such as split trunks and broken crowns need to be looked over carefully.

First and foremost, be safe. Wedged or hanging branches can come down unpredictably, so keep away. Do not attempt to work near power lines –



this is not a good way to make the six o'clock news!

The good news is, that if less than half of the crown is damaged, there is an excellent chance of recovery, although it may take several years for growth to fill in, so be patient.

Large evergreens that are bent over for extended periods of time do not recover the same from catastrophic damage and need to be looked over carefully. Only remove snow from evergreens before it is frozen to avoid further damage. Warm water may be used to remove ice and frozen snow.

Some factors to consider are:

- Does the tree get enough sunlight to recover easily? If it is heavily shaded, salvage is less likely
- Was the tree healthy and well shaped prior to suffering damage? A sickly or misshapen tree may not be worth keeping if it is in rough shape.

It is best to prune your trees before the buds start to form in spring. Some trees, particularly maple and birch trees, will “bleed” from breaks (or pruning cuts), but this will not harm the tree. Avoid using pruning paint.

Even if your tree has lost its leader, many trees will recover and produce new leader branches,

Extra care during the growing season will help. Early spring fertilizer will help boost growth, and long slow trickle watering will alleviate stress during dry spells.

Staking young flexible trees can sometimes be done when the growing season begins.

If the species is appropriate for treatment, pruning back the longer branches will help recovery.

Cross Pollination

Newsletter of the Halton
Master Gardeners

Website:

<http://haltonmastergardeners.wordpress.com>

March TO DO List

- ◇ Order summer flowering bulbs
- ◇ Check & repair garden tools
- ◇ Force branches of spring flowering shrubs
- ◇ Plan to add some native plants with berries to attract birds
- ◇ Keep bird feeders clean and topped up
- ◇ Attend Canada Blooms or other garden shows for ideas
- ◇ Plan new garden beds
- ◇ Pray for snow to end and warmer days ahead!

Master Gardeners of Halton

Where to find us this month for free gardening advice!



Royal Botanical Gardens Living & Garden Show March 28 to 30, 2014

Friday March 28th to Sunday March 30th from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

www.outdoorlivingandgardenshow.ca

Email Help Line: haltonmastergardeners@gmail.com

Halton Master Gardeners Speakers List

Join us for our monthly speakers held at the Royal Botanical Gardens at 7:15 p.m.

Contact: Patty King at a_p@cogeco.ca Please note a \$5.00 fee covers speakers and refreshments.

April 2, 2014 Topic: Stalking the Night Garden

Fiona Reid, Naturalist/Author/Illustrator & Wildlife Tour Guide talks about moths as night pollinators.

May 7, 2014 Topic: Native terrestrial orchids of Ontario

Jenna McGuire, Naturalist at Bruce Peninsula National Park/Fathom Five National Marine park shares information on collection and conservation of wild orchids

Tip of the Month

Here are tips from *The Old Farmer's Almanac* on how to start your seeds indoors.

- Share seeds since a packet often yields much than you will need.
 - Most annual flowers and vegetables should be sown indoors about 6 weeks before the last frost in your area.
 - You may have to soak, scratch, or chill seeds before planting, as directed on packet.
 - Use clean containers. Egg carton compartments make good containers. Be sure to poke holes in the sides near the bottom of the containers you use.
 - Label your containers now!
 - Use soilless peat moss and mix in equal parts vermiculite and perlite to hold enough water and allow oxygen to flow. Don't use potting soil.
 - Pour soilless mix into a large bucket and moisten with warm water. Fill your containers to just below the rim.
 - Plant your seeds according to your seed packet. Most seeds can simply be gently pressed into the mixture; you can use the eraser end of a pencil to push in seeds.
 - Cover containers with plastic. Prick holes with a toothpick for ventilation. Water as directed.
 - Water newly started seedlings carefully. A pitcher may let the water out too forcefully. A mist sprayer is gentle but can take a long time. Try using a meat-basting syringe, which will dispense the water effectively without causing too much soil disruption.
 - Find a place in the kitchen where there is natural bottom heat—on top of the refrigerator or near the oven. (Move the tray if the oven is on, as it may become too hot.)
 - Seeds sprout best at temperatures of 65 to 75°F (18 to 24°C).
 - When seedlings appear, remove the plastic and move containers into bright light.
- When the seedlings get their second pair of leaves, prepare individual pots filled with a potting mix with plenty of compost. Move the seedlings carefully to the new pots and water well. Keep pots out of direct sun for a few days.