

# Ice Storm Response

## Helping Landscape Trees Recover From Ice Storms

A coating of ice can add significant weight to individual trees. Stems and branches break, and some trees completely bend over. The entire tree may fail if the ground is soft or root systems are defective. Hardwoods and conifers of all ages can be affected. Ice storms kill some trees, but many damaged trees can survive. Some things can be done to help damaged trees recover.

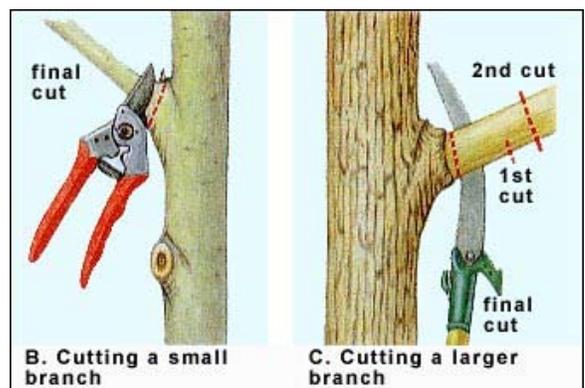
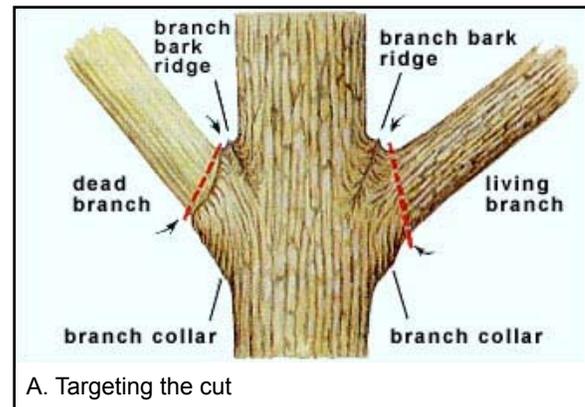
**Caution:** Homeowners working with damaged trees should use extreme caution. Removing large trees or limbs is dangerous work. Do not climb a ladder with a chain saw or climb into a damaged tree. Never touch any tree near electrical wires. Assess your particular tree situation, carefully watching for safety hazards. Most tree work should be done by professional arborists, especially when it requires climbing or the tree is leaning against other trees or structures.

**Evaluate trees:** If possible, have a qualified person assess damaged trees before taking action. Trees may look severely damaged, but can often recover if they are otherwise healthy. Landowners of larger acreages may want to wait until damage is evaluated by a forester before salvaging forest stands. Over time, damaged trees may develop more decay and discoloration.

**Assess immediate hazards first:** Remove dead trees; leaning trees; trees with broken or cracked stems, or extensive broken roots; and any large, dead, or broken limbs that are still attached to the tree.

***Don't Panic!***  
***Stop, Think, and Be Patient.***  
***Safety First and Foremost.***  
***Get Professional Advice.***

**Hire an arborist:** Hire a qualified arborist to do the work properly and safely. Trained arborists prune properly and reduce the chances of further damage to trees or other property. Check their certification, insurance (including proof of liability for personal and property damage), worker's compensation, and local references. Get several estimates from different arborists. Contact your State urban forestry coordinator for a list of qualified arborists.



**Prevent additional damage:** You may want to prune damaged trees later to improve their appearance and reduce additional hazards. If the top has been broken, the tree should be pruned back to a strong lateral branch. Damaged branches should be pruned back to the branch collar (see illustrations A, B, and C).

Some damage may not be immediately apparent. Hidden cracks may cause branches to droop when leaves come out in the spring. Stem decay and cracks may lead to loss of structural soundness, causing the tree or large branches to become hazardous. Root damage may not be evident until twigs or branches in the upper crown begin dying after two or three growing seasons. Stressed, dying, and dead trees attract insect pests, such as borers and bark beetles. Remove insect-infested trees to reduce risk to healthy trees nearby.



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December 2008

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