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NEWS

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Colorado State Forest Service Offers First Aid Tips for Snow-Damaged Trees

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – Many Front Range residents awoke on Wednesday to find that their trees had been damaged by Colorado’s first major spring snowstorm of 2010.

North Area Community Forester Keith Wood of the Colorado State Forest Service said that although the first impulse may be to start sawing when a tree is damaged, homeowners should assess the situation first to avoid hurting themselves or further damaging the tree. Wood and the CSFS offer the following tips for dealing with snow-damaged trees; the tips were adapted from International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) recommendations:

1. **Check for hazards.** Before approaching a tree, examine your surroundings to avoid making contact with downed utility lines or standing under hanging branches that are broken and ready to fall.
2. **Contact city officials if necessary.** Trees between the street and a city sidewalk may be the responsibility of city crews.
3. **Assess the damage.** If a tree is healthy overall and still possesses its leader (the main upward branch), most of its major limbs and 50 percent or more of its crown, the chance is good for a complete recovery.
4. **Avoid knocking snow off branches.** This may cause the branches to break. If you must remove snow, gently push up on branches from below to prevent adding additional stress.
5. **Remove broken branches.** This minimizes the risk of decay and insects or diseases entering the wound. Prune at the branch collar – the point where a branch joins a larger one – and be mindful of potential pent-up energy if the branch is twisted or bent.
6. **Don’t over-prune.** With the loss of some branches, a tree may look unbalanced, but most trees quickly grow new foliage that hides bare areas.
7. **Don’t try to do it all yourself.** If the job requires running a chainsaw overhead, sawing from a ladder or removing large branches or entire trees, contact an insured, certified arborist. Professionals often are listed in the phone book under “tree services.”

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“Preventive maintenance and regularly scheduled pruning can help you avoid major damage when the next storm strikes,” said Wood. “Contact a local certified arborist for more tips on how to make your trees as storm-proof as possible.”

For more information about tree care and protection, visit the Colorado State Forest Service website at csfs.colostate.edu. To find an ISA-certified arborist, visit www.isa-arbor.com.

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