

Branching Out – Tree Care Tips

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Hold the Salt, if you're near a tree!

Each winter millions of tons of de-icing salt are applied to state and municipal roads to keep the roads safe for vehicles to travel. Salt is spread near houses to avoid pedestrian injuries. This is necessary for safety, but did you know excessive salt can cause widespread damage to trees, possibly leading to permanent decline and even death? Salt damage, even severe damage might not be visible on a tree until the end of the summer, leaving homeowners wondering what might have caused the problem. In some cases decline might not show up for years. Salt deposits migrate to the stems, buds and roots of trees, which cause disfigured foliage, stunted growth, and severe decline in tree health. Salt runoff washes from the pavement into the ground, increasing salt levels in the soil.

What to do to avoid salt damage

- Avoid using de-icing salt, instead use sand, cinders or ash
- Use alternative de-icing salts such as calcium chloride and calcium magnesium acetate
- Improve drainage of the soil by adding organic matter, and thoroughly leach salt residues from the soil
- Erect barriers between pavement and plants
- Plant trees in locations away from any type of salt spray
- Plant salt resistant trees in areas where high salt spray is inevitable
- Prune properly and add fertilizers to correct nutrient deficiencies
- Keep trees healthy by controlling damaging diseases and pest infestations

If you have additional questions or would like information on tree care, please contact a professional, certified arborist. Gluck Tree Care, Inc. of Random Lake employs certified arborists and has over 20 years of arboriculture experience. Certified arborists must follow stringent safety and performance standards, are required to have insurance, and have a trained and professional staff, that is dedicated to ethics and quality in business practices.