

# WINTER TREE CARE

As trees head into winter, they begin to shut down and withdraw resources from leaves to focus on twigs, branches and roots. Trees still grow roots, respire and take in water and nutrients. Winter weather stresses Colorado trees by rapid temperature fluctuation, high winds, heavy snow and ice, periods of drought, and foraging rodents. Trees need care to survive winter conditions. To find out more about winter impact, link to: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/Garden/07211.html>

## *Mulching*

Mulching established trees as well as new trees helps conserve moisture. Mulch improves soil fertility and acts as an insulating blanket. Eliminate grass and weeds in the mulch area as they compete with the tree for moisture. Apply organic mulch to a depth of 3-4 inches within the drip line. Materials for mulch include wood chips, bark, leaves and evergreen needles.

## *Winter Watering*

Because of climate conditions, trees in Colorado need to be watered when there is little winter precipitation. Water only when air temperatures are above 40 degrees F, at midday so water will have time to soak in before night time freezes. With dry spells from October-March, water one to two times per month within the dripline.

## *Tree Wrapping*

Recent research has not proven the benefits of tree wrapping. Benefits are not as positive as once thought and may cause some harm. Problems include disease, fungi, insects, freezing injury below the wrap, and tree girdling. A majority of arborists recommend that the decision be made based on site, variety of tree and environmental factors. If you choose to wrap, use the paper type of protection, put it on at Thanksgiving and off at Easter. Use care when you unwrap and be sure to remove it in early spring.

## *Snow Removal*

If there is snowfall in autumn months and leaves are still on trees, freeing the limbs of snow can prevent broken and split limbs. Spring snows that come when trees have already started to leaf out can also cause problems. Evergreens need the weight of snow and ice removed throughout winter. Collected snow can be removed with a broom. Sweep upward to lift off the snow.

