



## Early Bud Break and its effect on my trees

*By Erin C. Young*

With the recent unusual fluctuations in temperature we've experienced in the Mid-Atlantic region during the past few years, many trees are at risk for early bud break (EBB). This is an issue because it cuts short the dormancy/resting period of your trees. EBB confuses trees drastically. When the temperatures rise and buds begin to break on trees, leaves start to grow in order to create energy. At the same time, fluctuating temperatures spur root hair growth and production.

When these activities take place during the wrong time or season, the tree will become stressed. When temperatures drop again, the growth both in the canopy and in the roots can fall victim to frost damage. This means trees that we love for their fruits or flowers may have neither in the upcoming season. Trees showing signs of EBB may also be stressed by lack of water due to freezing temperatures; and carbohydrates that would normally be rationed out during dormancy are used up during the growth, leaving limited energy resources to replace them.

As a result, this stress, combined with frost injuries, leaves our trees open to countless other problems, such as insect and disease issues.

To minimize early bud break injury:

- Mulch the tree if the ground isn't frozen to keep it insulated until spring
- If you see a drop in temperature in the forecast, thoroughly water your tree the night

If you need assistance with stressed trees from early bud break, call **Mead Tree & Turf Care** to meet with one of our ISA Certified Arborists.

*Erin C. Young*