

Should I Remove Snow From My Trees and Shrubs?

by Erin C. Young

You don't have to remove light snow from trees and shrubs—it's the heavy stuff that can be damaging. Evergreen trees and shrubs are especially susceptible to having their branches broken after a heavy snowfall, because their foliage allows the branches to collect large amounts of snow. So, if a heavy snowfall has hit your area, blow or brush the snow off by hand or with a broom with upward strokes. Branches can be brittle during the winter months, so be as gentle as possible.

When ice has accumulated, then it's time to leave the branches alone and let it all melt off. Trying to remove the ice at this point will likely cause more damage. If any branches do break, and they aren't a hazard to you or the overall health of the tree, wait to have them pruned by a certified arborist at the end of the winter. The end of the winter is the best time to prune because trees and plants are still in dormancy, but it's not so cold that it could expose them to more damage. If branches do present a hazard, have a certified arborist come to remove them right away.

Our ISA certified arborists at [Mead Tree & Turf Care](#) can assist you with these strategies to minimizing winter injury:

- Select hardy species and cultivars
- Avoid late-summer fertilization or pruning, which might stimulate new growth
- Water trees and shrubs, especially evergreens, during dry periods until the ground freezes
- Use mulch to conserve soil moisture and insulate the roots from cold temperatures
- Protect evergreens from wind and salt spray with burlap screens
- Apply anti-desiccant to evergreens starting in late fall, following label instructions

