

## Winter Injury / Evergreen Desiccation

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With the warm and dry winter temperatures we have had over the past few months, the Schutter Diagnostic Lab has been receiving several samples of evergreen trees and shrubs with symptoms of winter injury.



*This is a cultural/environmental issue:* Resulting from minimal snow cover and extended periods of low humidity, narrow and broad-leaved evergreens (especially spruce, Douglas-fir and pines) are subject to drying out, especially if supplemental irrigation is not applied to the plants during the fall and winter months. This results from the plants continuing to lose moisture through transpiration at a rate faster than it can be replenished. Common symptoms include red, yellow or brown discoloration of foliage, especially on needle tips, and can sometimes affect entire branches. Damage is more pronounced on the south and south-west sides, and can also cause damage to roots which can further impact their ability to replace lost moisture.

Damage can be more severe in areas with high wind exposure, during periods of large fluctuation between daytime and nighttime temperatures, and on younger/newly transplanted trees and shrubs without well-established root systems.

These symptoms, although they appear alarming, will be less obvious as soon as the tree pushes the new growth and/or drops its dead needles. As long as the buds are soft and green (as they are in this case), there is still good growth and life in the tree. It is important to make sure your trees are watered thoroughly and regularly during dry periods, especially into the fall.



Please open the following links for information about caring for stressed trees:

<https://ag.umass.edu/fact-sheets/helping-trees-to-manage-stress>

<https://www.bartlett.com/resources/simple-steps-to-aid-stressed-trees.pdf>

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