

GROUNDSKEEPER™ NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Issue 1

Harshest Winter of New Millenium

This is our first newsletter of 2014. It is not news to anyone that this winter was extremely harsh. The ground froze in November and the freezing depth was over twice the normal depth. Additionally, we had over 70 inches of snow and a snow pack that lasted almost the entire winter. I expect that we will have a late start to spring flowers due to the harshness of the winter. Also, we've all noticed the damage caused to roads and sidewalks from the extreme temperatures (even for Chicago). This cold and heavy snow pack potentially caused damage to your landscaping. Expect to see damaged shrubs. This could include broken branches from snow, animal damage as they had a tougher time finding food this winter and cold damaged branches on some plant species. Additionally, you may see turf damage from the prolonged snow pack. On the bright side, we should see less insect damage on plants and turf this year and should see less pressure from grubs and other beetles. As always, GroundsKeeper can help you with your landscaping issues this spring. This includes trimming shrubs to remove damaged branches and to restore their shape, replacing damaged plants and repairing hardscaping that may have heaved during the winter. A reminder that we are on Facebook and you can Like us there and find timely information from time to time. Also, if you have any comments, suggestions or requests, please let us know.



GROUNDSKEEPER NEWS

We are expecting a very busy 2014. Our tree services have expanded and you may see us working in Orland Park, Frankfort, Palos Park, Burr Ridge or Cook County Forest Preserves removing EAB infested trees. We now have 3 crews performing these functions to augment our 4 landscaping crews. Miguel Aguirre and Salvador Ceballos have been promoted to crew foreman. These additions and promotions will continue to allow us to service your properties effectively.

Gardening Tips

EARLY APRIL

- Rake the lawn and remove leaves and twigs
- Check for winter snow and salt damage
- Prevent soil compaction by reducing traffic
- Cut ornamental grasses back to a few inches
- Prepare new planting beds

APRIL / MAY

- Replenish mulch around existing trees
- Monitor trees and shrubs
- Control apple scab with spray at bud break
- Avoid pruning live wood of oaks and elms April through October
- Divide and move perennials as needed



OUR SERVICES

Outdoor Lighting

Ponds

Pavers

Putting Greens

Tree Services

Shrub Pruning

Landscape Design



Winter Effects On Turf

It is quite likely that the heavy snow pack and cold will have a significant impact on your landscaping.

Turf

You will likely see damage to your parkway from salting of the road ways. Additionally, you may have patches of sod that die due to snow mold from the copious snow that we've received. If these patches are less than 6" in diameter they should recover over the course of the year and look better by fall. If the spots are bigger than this you can consider over-seeding or patching in sod.

Some overall recommendations follow:

EAB UPDATE

The Emerald Ash Bore (EAB) has been found throughout the Chicago area. We are currently removing ash trees in several towns including Orland Park, Frankfort, Palos Park and Cook County Forest Preserves. As a reminder, EAB only attacks ash trees and will kill your ash trees if they are left untreated. Municipalities are choosing to remove their ash trees due to the cost of treating all of their trees. The USDA has indicated that treatments are having a positive effect on ash populations so individual home owners that elect to treat their trees are definitely helping to control the problem. These treatments should be done in the spring or early summer. It is possible that the harsh winter has reduced the pest pressure from EAB. However, it has not eliminated the threat. If your ash tree is still in good shape, it may not be too late to start treating to save your tree. Our Certified Arborists can consult with you to determine if these treatments are warranted or if removal is recommended.

WINTER LANDSCAPE DAMAGE

The harsh winter probably had an impact on your plants and hardscaping just as it did your turf. You may notice broken branches due to the weight of the snow, damaged branches from animals, or damaged plants due to the cold. In many of these cases proper pruning can rejuvenate the plants and allow them to fully recover in a year or two. Remember that the best time to trim shrubs is in the winter (when they are not snow covered of course). During that time, pruning does not stress your plants. Additionally, it is easy to identify damaged and diseased branches during the winter. If you only prune once per year, we strongly recommend that you prune in the winter. Typically we do this pruning in late February or March but it can be done anytime after the plants go dormant for the winter.

Additionally, if you have concrete or pavers you may notice damage to your patio. We are certainly seeing plenty of damage to the roads due to the extreme cold and depth of freezing. If you have concrete that is damaged, usually your only option is to replace. On the other hand, if you have pavers and there is heaving or unevenness it is usually repaired very easily. That's a benefit of having pavers. Even if they shift slightly, repairs are usually quick and not extremely expensive.

When you evaluate your landscaping this spring, remember that your plants will likely leaf out later than normal. Don't hesitate to call us at 708-301-7441 if you would like us to assist you with repairing or replacing any of your damaged landscaping.

GROUNDSKEEPER™

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Grounds Keeper

Landscape Design • Installation • Maintenance • Tree Care

First, do not apply large amounts of nitrogen fertilizer first thing in the spring. Heavy applications of nitrogen fertilizer in the spring can cause serious lawn problems. Weeds and crabgrass may be a bigger problem this spring if your turf has been damaged because the weeds will be able to out compete your grass. Crabgrass generally begins germinating around the beginning of May, so a target date of the beginning to mid-April is a

good time to put down pre-emergent herbicides that prevent weed seeds from germinating. Pre-Emergence crabgrass herbicides need to be put down prior to crabgrass germination to work, so it's better to apply slightly early rather than too late, but don't put them on in March. Once we reach the middle of May, you will be able to accurately assess the visible damage to your turf. At this time we can help you determine whether seeding or installing new sod is the proper course of action. Additionally, we continue to recommend proper watering (about 1" per week), mowing (3" or higher) and aeration in order to develop a stronger, deeper root system.



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