

Give your backyard trees some TLC this winter

During winter, temperatures plummet, rain sets in for weeks, and here in the Willamette Valley, we may even see the occasional snow or ice storm. Thankfully, we can put on our rain boots, add a scarf, or curl up on the couch with a cozy blanket. The poor trees in our yards cannot.

“While your trees seem to be in a state of hibernation in the winter, exposure to the tough conditions can cause them major stress,” said Jim Skiera, Executive Director of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). “Minimize that stress by helping your trees through the old months, a little at a time. If you take care of your trees in the winter, you’ll be rewarded in the spring.”

Here are helpful tips to keep your trees happy and healthy during the colder winter months:

1.) Put composted organic mulch under your tree in the early winter to help retain water and reduce temperature extremes. The mulch acts like a blanket around tree roots.



Proper tree care during winter months will lead to healthier growth in the spring. (PHOTO FROM JUNE 2012 HARVEST OF DARRELL AND DARLENE BRITTON'S CHERRY TREES)

2.) If necessary, give your trees a drink. We normally get plenty of rain during the winters months, but if it's been dry for several weeks, help your trees out with some water.

3.) Winter is the best time to prune trees. Limit pruning to deadwood and poorly places branches so you can save as many living limbs as possible.

If you're hesitant to do your own pruning, there are several local yard care companies who offer fruit tree and vine care packages.

4.) Winter ice and snow storms can cause damage for trees. Wrap the base of young trees in a hard, plastic guard or a metal hardware cloth. Wrapping trees with burlap or plastic can prevent temperature damage. Don't forget to remove wraps and guards in the spring to prevent damage when trees sprout new growth.

5.) Don't forget to consider pest management solutions. There are several products that offer organic and non-organic pest management techniques.

THE VALUE OF TREES

Trees offer many benefits that are obscure to most, which include:

- **Air filtration** - Filtering out particular matter and absorbing harmful gasses
- **Purifying water** - Improving water quality by slowing and filtering rain water
- **Cost reduction** - providing shade and shelter, reducing yearly heating and cooling costs by 2.1 billion dollars
- **Climate control** - obtained by moderating the effects of sun, wind, and rain
- **Increased property value** - well-cared for landscaped properties are 5 to 20% more valuable than non-landscaped estates.
- **Protection** - From downward fall of rain, sleet, and hail, as well as reduction of storm run-off and the possibility of flooding.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Elise Bauman is the new Food Resource Developer for Salem Harvest. She reaches out to farmers and growers to let them know about our organization. She has been a volunteer for about three years.

What is her favorite part about Salem Harvest? “My favorite part of volunteering with Salem Harvest is the feeling I get knowing that I am helping provide healthy food for struggling families and that I am saving perfectly good food from going to waste, all while building a stronger community.”

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A season of planning and maintenance

LOCAL FARMERS SPEND THE WINTER MONTHS PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR THE GROWING SEASON.

You may think most farmers get to sit back and relax in the winter time. However, those winter months offer local farmers time to plan and prepare for the upcoming growing season.



“Winter is not a break for us,” says Erin Gruetzman of [Beilke Family Farm](#), “It is just a time of different kinds of jobs.”

Farmers attend OSHA safety meetings, classes and meetings. They work hard to prepare for upcoming farm inspections. They review previous season’s crop profitability and plan for the upcoming season’s crops.

Probably one of the most important tasks is repairing and maintaining equipment and machinery. “During the growing season, if a repair is needed, we usually fix it the best we can to keep going,” says Gruetzman. “In the winter, you have more time to fix things and can do a better job.”

Pruning is also a large and time-consuming task during the winter months. Beilke Family Farm estimates it takes roughly three months to prune their apple trees and blueberry plants.

Local farmers also provide annual safety trainings for employees during the winter months. We are so grateful to the local farmers who help provide our community with healthy produce and provide service to Salem Harvest.

Salem Harvest named Sustainable Service of the Year

SALEM HARVEST WINS 2013 MID-VALLEY GREEN AWARD

On March 2, Salem Harvest was proud to receive a 2013 Mid-Valley Green Award in the category of Sustainable Service of the Year. This is the second year Salem Harvest has been nominated in that category.

“We are delighted to have won this award,” says Salem Harvest President, Alicia Bay, “We are so grateful for the contributions of our volunteers and corporate sponsors that enable Salem Harvest to fulfill our mission and feed hungry local families.”

A [Statesman Journal](#) article about the winners of the 2013 Mid-Valley Green Awards can be found [here](#).

Salem Harvest

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CONSIDER MAKING A GIFT

You can [make a gift](#) to Salem Harvest, or make a donation in a friend's name. Your donation helps pay for harvest equipment, signage, software fees, liability insurance and more. We have no paid staff or office fees, so all donations go directly toward our core mission - connecting people to fresh produce that would otherwise go to waste. Contact [Alicia Bay](#) for more information.

OUR MISSION

SALEM HARVEST is an all-volunteer organization established in 2010. Our mission is to help hungry families gain self-sufficiency, build community, and celebrate sustainable lifestyles.

Salem Harvest connects farmers and backyard growers with volunteers who harvest produce that would otherwise go to waste. More than half of each harvest is donated to the Marion-Polk Food Share or its affiliated food agencies.

Since 2010, Salem Harvest has harvested over 312,000 pounds of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables at more than 215 harvests.

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