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Trees Tell Their Stories

As we ended the month of May, one tree story that was most prevalent was the wilting of many new leaves. This phenomenon was occurring on a variety of tree species, Oak, Ash, Maple, Beech, and over a very large area of the state. Most of our county foresters fielded questions and concerns related to this event.

So, here's what we know, or at least what we all think. This happened as a result of a couple of different things. First was the real cold snap this past winter. That seems to have frozen a few of the buds enough to slow, or certainly adversely affect, their coming out this spring. The second, and perhaps bigger event, was the late freeze that occurred on May 18. Some of the new leaves were already out, or certainly were getting started, right at the same time. Not only did it hit the typical subjects, early flowers and garden plants, but our trees were affected much the same. In areas where the leaves weren't out quite as much, the leaves were much less affected.



These are a couple of examples of damage caused by the freeze to some Oak trees in Lancaster.



This is damage to an American Beech tree, much the same as the Oak.

Although the damage looks really bad, it likely will not cause long-term damage. Healthy trees will rebound quite well with new leaves coming in fairly quickly. Not all the damaged leaves will be replaced, but certainly enough to sustain continued growth and the trees will not get worse.

If you do happen to have your favorite tree in the yard that was affected, adding some water frequently throughout the drier times this summer will aid in the full recovery. The overall message after this event, wait a little time and let your trees respond and rebound. If you haven't already, you should see new green leaves popping out again soon.

If you have other questions, or continued questions after these impacts, please feel free to contact your county forester. We are always available to answer questions and offer aid and information.

Enjoy your summer season and be safe!