

# THE PURDUE LANDSCAPE REPORT

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## In This Issue

- Deicing salts helpful for people but not landscape plants
- Stay toasty all winter AND keep your trees healthy
- Growing Green Collars – Seed Your Future

## Deicing salts helpful for people but not landscape plants

(Rosie Lerner, [rosie@purdue.edu](mailto:rosie@purdue.edu))



Salt damage on yews usually appears in late winter or early spring as needle browning.

Deicing salts can save your neck this winter, but they can spell disaster for landscape plants. Whether the salt is sprayed on the plants from passing traffic near the road or is shoveled onto plants near the sidewalk, the salt can cause damage.

Salts can adversely affect plants in several ways. Salts deposited on the surface of twigs, branches and evergreen leaves can cause excessive drying of foliage and roots. They can be taken up by plants and accumulate to toxic levels. Sodium salts in particular can also cause a nutritional imbalance by changing the chemistry of the soil and harm soil structure.

The most apparent damage is death of buds and twig tips as a result of salt spray. As the tips of the plants die, the plant responds by growing an excessive number of side branches. However, accumulation damage is more slowly manifested and may not be noticeable for many months. Affected plants might show stunting, poor vigor, die back of growing tips, and leaf burn or leaf drop.

The best way to deal with salt damage is to prevent it in the first place. Sodium salts are the most common type used for deicing, since they're inexpensive and most readily available. Unfortunately, sodium salts are the most likely to cause plant damage. When possible, use alternatives to sodium products,

such as calcium chloride or calcium magnesium acetate (CMA).

Protect roadside plants by constructing burlap or durable plastic screens to shield them from traffic splash. If screening from traffic is not practical, try to use salt-tolerant plants such as Juniper, Siberian pea shrub, poplar and honey locust.

Avoid throwing salted sidewalk residue on nearby plants, including shrubs and ground covers. Use alternatives, such as clean cat litter, sand or sawdust, to help improve traction on ice.

For more information on salt damage to landscape plants including salt-tolerant plants, see Purdue Extension bulletin ID-412-W.

<http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ID/ID-412-W.pdf>

## Stay toasty all winter AND keep your trees healthy

(Elizabeth Barnes, [barne175@purdue.edu](mailto:barne175@purdue.edu))



The image shows a pile of short cut logs in a field. The logs take up most of the foreground. There is a red tractor and the edge of a fall forest in the background. Image taken by Shawn Harquail.

Now that fall has arrived many people have begun collecting next year's firewood and clearing their yards of brush and downed trees. This can be a great way to both tidy up your property and save some money but there are a few pitfalls to avoid. Already dead trees or dropped limbs can make easy pickings for firewood but often have pests or pathogens hidden inside. There [140+ pests and pathogens](#) like spotted lanternfly, Asian longhorned beetle, and thousand cankers disease that can be spread in dead wood. Even trees that seem healthy may be in the early stages of infestation or infection. Bringing this wood back to your home, cabin, or favorite campground risks exposing healthy trees to deadly threats. However, there are easy ways to collect your own wood without these risks.

## Where to Collect

Collect your firewood within 30 miles of where you plan to use it. Generally trees inside of this radius are exposed to the same types of pests and pathogens so there is a lower risk of spreading something new. If you move this wood too far (more than 30 miles) you risk moving a pest or pathogen to a new area where they can attack and kill new trees. By not moving wood far from where it is collected you can prevent the spread of these pests to new, un-infested areas.

## What to do with it

Have more brush or cut wood than you know what to do with? Here are few ideas!

- Leave it for wildlife. Many animals use fallen limbs and brush for shelter and food. Leaving your wood on the ground or in sturdy piles can give them places to hide over the cold winter.
- Burn it in fire pits, bonfires, or fireplaces. Be sure to follow local regulations and [burn carefully](#).
- Chip it for mulch and use for landscaping.
- Use it for posts or garden stakes.
- Give it to nearby neighbors.
- Compost it. Some landfills and composting sites allow for wood disposal. Be sure that wherever you bring the wood is within 30 miles of where you collect it.

## What NOT to do:

- Move more than 30 miles for any purpose.
- Leave for free on the side of the road. You can't be sure who will pick it up and how far they'll move it!

## Where to Store it

Store your firewood away from your home, outdoors, off the ground, and covered. Piles of firewood may attract animals and insects looking for food and shelter. Most of [these animals and insects](#) are no more than mild nuisances in homes but can still be unpleasant to deal with. Storing firewood away from your home reduces the chance that you'll have to deal with these unwelcome guests. To learn more about firewood storage check out [this helpful guide](#).

Additional credit for this article goes to Tess Hoffman.

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## Growing Green Collars – Seed Your Future

(Kyle Daniel, [daniel38@purdue.edu](mailto:daniel38@purdue.edu))

*Susan E. Yoder, Executive Director, Seed Your Future*

It's an uneasy time in horticulture. Many in the industry are aging and retiring. Employers across the industry cannot find enough qualified candidates to fill their open positions. Certification programs, training programs, and college and university horticulture programs are not growing – and in many cases, declining. This issue is not simply about the strength of our industry, it is about the future of the planet. The crisis comes as

we consider — who will take the reins and have the expertise to provide the technology, science, art and business acumen necessary to meet the rapidly increasing demand for ornamentals, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and herbs in our world?

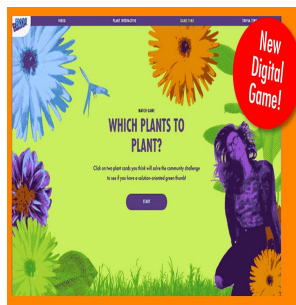


The answer is you.

It's you, and me, and other horticulture professionals, and frankly, everyone who already knows that the fate of our world lies in the next generation embracing the importance of plants not only to humans, but to animals, and to Earth. Our job is to show others the way, and inspire more people to pursue “green collar” careers.

So, how do we do it? You're busy with your own company, workload, community and family. That's where collaboration and the Seed Your Future movement can help. “Planted” in 2014, Seed Your Future was formed by a partnership of horticulture companies, gardening organizations, schools, colleges and universities, public gardens and youth organizations who are united by the mission to promote horticulture and inspire more people to pursue careers working with plants.

We spent three years conducting research which today serves as a foundation for the work that officially launched in 2018. Kids told us they don't know what “horticulture” is. After we told them, they told us to stop using “weird” words like “horticulture”, show them through video and social media content how plants can change the world, and have “cool” young people tell them about their fun (#ILoveMyPlantJob) careers.



Seed Your Future's BLOOM!

([www.WeAreBLOOM.org](http://www.WeAreBLOOM.org)) campaign was launched in the spring of 2018, and we've already reached 4 million students. Anyone can download the free resources at [www.Scholastic.com/BLOOM](http://www.Scholastic.com/BLOOM) (educator resources) and [www.WeAreBLOOM.org/partners](http://www.WeAreBLOOM.org/partners) (toolkit of materials). That's promising progress — but a very long “growing season.” You need employees now.

We're developing our second campaign market — this one focusing on older students. But, how do we cut through the clutter and show them the way to horticulture?

We know that plant careers are rewarding, make a true difference in the world, are creative, inspirational, and more. So, let's tell our

stories and become PR gurus. Let's learn from what kids told us, and embrace social media, create fun videos, and tell the inspirational stories of the horticulture heroes and plant champions in the world today. ([www.seedyourfuture.org/horticultureheroes](http://www.seedyourfuture.org/horticultureheroes)).

You can join in too. Use all the materials we create and curate from others who are doing terrific things in this area. Join the movement ([www.SeedYourFuture.org](http://www.SeedYourFuture.org) - it's free) and use or customize what we have so far.

Together, we can ensure that the next generation is raised to take on green collar careers. I invite you to show them the way.

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