

Front Range trees hit by several damaging freezes

After two drastic temperature drops last October and a significant freeze this April, many trees in Highlands Ranch and the rest of the Front Range are struggling or dead. Unseasonable cold snaps that hit trees when they are not dormant cause more damage than prolonged freezing temperatures during the winter.

After taking inventory of affected trees and waiting through the spring to see if they would leaf out again, Metro District forestry staff is removing unsafe and dead trees as necessary. The process is expected to last through the 2020 growing season. Through June, we have removed 130 trees and are systematically working through the community. After removals, the stumps will be ground and the location will be reevaluated for replacement.

Ash, elm, cottonwood, maple, pine and spruce trees were especially affected. Some replacement tree options suitable for our climate include oak, linden, hackberry and honey locust trees.

Homeowners concerned about trees on their own property should monitor them and consult a professional arborist. Signs of damage include:

- twig tissue that is brown instead of green
- twigs or branches that are not pliable and that snap off easily
- failure to leaf out

The Metro District cares for an expanding suburban forest with more than 15,000 trees in our parks and parkways. For questions, please contact Forestry Supervisor Dennis Donovan at ddonovan@highlandsranch.org or 720-240-5915.