THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Field Notes for The Week Of

2-7-22

Ice is Not Nice!

February slipped in on me (literally slipped) with plenty of winter games on the farm. From canoeing to the cattle feedlot to ice skating to sheep shed, old man winter is sure doing his best to run me out of town and head south. This past week was ground hog day and Punxsutawney Phil basically predicted what I already knew, six more weeks of winter. Soon spring will be here, and things will begin to grow once again. With much of the area receiving about ½ inch of ice many landowners are now dealing with the mess that remains after melting. Evergreen trees such as white pine, Norway Spruce, Blue spruce, and Eastern Red Cedar are very susceptible to ice damage due to the ability of ice to accumulate on needles, increasing weight on branches causing breaking of smaller and younger branches. Other species that are very susceptible to ice damage is Bradford Pear, Weeping Willows, and certain fruit trees. Trees located close to structures or utilities should be evaluated very closely for health and structure before winter comes but here are some things to consider now as you begin to clean up the remnants of the 2022 ice storm.

- **Plant for resistance**- Spring is coming and many people will be buying tree seedlings to plant on their property. When skimming though the nursery guide make sure to investigate in ice damage resistance. Characteristics that make trees resistance to ice accumulation include, branch water shedding or low surface areas, a conical branching pattern, strong branch attachment, and trees that have course and few branching. Tree species that exhibit ice damage resistance include Kentucky Coffee Tree, Black Walnut, Ginko, Bald Cyprus, Norway Mapel, White Oak and of course Ironwood.
- **Damage can occur even when branches are intact**- The bending of branches due to the weight of ice and snow accumulation can cause damage that may not be noticed until later in the spring and summer. Extreme bending of branches can cause stretching and damaging the xylem or vascular tissue. This is the interlayer of the tree that is responsible for conveying water and nutrients from the roots throughout the plant.
- **An ounce of Prevention is worth a pound of cure**- Pruning and managing disease issues through the growing season can make trees healthier and more resistant to winter damage.