



The Tree Council's Tree Care Campaign

21st March to 21st September

Tree Survival in unsettled weather

In wet and windy weather, your first priority should be trees planted in the last three years. These newly planted trees often have roots that have not developed fully. As a result, they are not yet anchored firmly into the ground and are particularly at risk from extreme weather conditions such as high wind and heavy rainfall.

Spotting a tree with wind stress

The signs of wind stress vary according to tree species and age, but some common signs in young trees are:

- Leaning to one side, away from prevailing wind direction
- Splits at a weak fork
- Broken or splintered branches

Spotting signs of damage to a tree from waterlogged soils

It can be difficult to judge a tree's reaction to waterlogged soils, since trees in general are slow to show symptoms. Symptoms of water stress can include:

- Yellowing and early drop of some leaves
- The early onset of autumn color and full leaf drop
- Small leaf size
- Dead twigs and leaves at the ends of branches

Top 10 tips for caring for young trees in unsettled weather:

1. Since the weather is unpredictable, regularly check your trees to ensure that damage has not occurred due to extreme conditions and take appropriate action.
2. After stormy weather, check for abrasion on the bark caused by rubbing against the stake or loose ties. Replace the stake or re-tie the ties to prevent further abrasion.
3. If a stake has been snapped by the tree moving in windy weather, replace it and re-tie.
4. To prevent newly planted trees from being rocked backwards and forwards and becoming loose, stake them firmly back in place if necessary. Re-stabilise wind blasted small stock that is not staked by treading the soil around it.
5. On windy sites, two or three stakes can be inserted opposite each other, or equally spaced around the tree outside the root ball, and secured to the trunk by long ties or a timber crossbar and tie.
6. If windy conditions have caused the tree to lean to one side or to become top heavy, reset or shorten the stake and replace the tie at the top of the stake to ensure the stem stands upright.
7. If your trees survive wind damage or waterlogging, remove any dead or damaged limbs once the bark has dried out.
8. Ensure that the tree guard has not filled with water, by raising its base above the soil level. Also check that it is not so tight to the tree that water cannot escape.
9. Mulching can reduce compaction and soil erosion that can often follow heavy rain.
10. If the tree has died due to waterlogging, replace with an appropriate species that tolerates wet soils, for example alder, willow or poplar.