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Ice-covered trees hide hazards beyond the obvious

As a rare winter storm passes through Ontario, homeowners and clean-up crews need to remember to be extremely careful when working around damaged and ice-covered trees, cautions the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Ontario Chapter.

What has fallen to the ground is just part of the overall danger associated with storm-damaged trees. A major storm like this can do massive damage high in the treetops, posing extreme danger to people for weeks and months to come.

Potential hazards and tree problems are not always obvious to the untrained eye. Ice-damaged tree branches can split or break in the treetops, and branches of all sizes can come crashing down at any time - especially during high winds.

This is why trees should be checked from the bottom up, preferably by a Certified Arborist, to determine the full extent of storm damage.

As winds pick up over the next few days and weeks, please continue to take extreme caution when near trees.

Tips for clean-up crews and homeowners:

- Do not go near any tree close to power lines. If you are concerned about a tree located near a power line, please contact your local utility company to report the problem.
- If you are concerned about a tree on municipal property, please contact your local municipality to report the problem.
- Please be prepared for longer than normal wait times.
- Leave dangerous work such as pruning or removing trees, especially large ones, to professionals who are trained in the art and science of caring for and maintaining trees. Certified Arborists are tree care professionals who have achieved a level of knowledge and experience allowing them to pass a comprehensive exam, and they are equipped to do the job safely.
- Locate a Certified Arborist in your area by checking the Yellow Pages, or visiting the ISA website at www.treesaregood.org

- Ask any tree care company or Certified Arborist for proof of insurance before hiring them to do work on your trees. A reputable company will have personal and property damage insurance as well as worker's compensation coverage.
- Be wary of individuals who go door-to-door and offer bargains for doing tree work. Most reputable companies are far too busy to solicit work this way. Shoddy workmanship can do even more damage to your trees.
- Say, "no, thanks" to anyone claiming to be a tree professional who offers to 'top' your tree, then look for someone else. Topping trees does more harm than good, increasing the tree's recovery time and making the tree more dangerous. For details on why topping hurts, visit www.treesaregood.org.

For Further Information Contact the International Society of Arboriculture, Ontario Chapter at www.isaontario.com or by phone at [1-888-463-2316](tel:1-888-463-2316)

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Ontario Chapter has over 600 members, and there are currently over 1000 ISA Certified Arborist's in the Province of Ontario. The International head office of ISA, headquartered in Champaign, Ill., is a non-profit organization supporting tree care research around the world. As part of ISA's dedication to the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees, it offers the only internationally recognized certification program in the industry. For more information, contact a local ISA Certified Arborist or visit www.isa-arbor.com .

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