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### ***Tree Monitoring***

Trees are often taken for granted. Once we get them established, it is pretty easy to ‘walk away’ and forget them. 2020 might not be the year to do so.

2019 did a number on many of our tree species. Excess moisture resulted in foliar diseases like cedar apple rust and anthracnose. That same moisture likely caused root damage to some species as well, especially if trees were in standing water for an extended period. Insect pressure – like bagworms – resulted in defoliation and could result in additional problems as well. All of this means that close attention needs to be paid to our landscape and windbreak trees as they leaf out and start to grow this spring.

In some cases, we may see trees not leaf out at all, overcome by too much stress last year. Others may leaf out slower than expected. For some fruit trees, fruit production may be reduced. Still, other trees may seem to be just fine, only to begin to fail as we head into warmer weather with more variable moisture. In all cases, be sure to do a thorough evaluation to determine the severity of damage and the potential for recovery before removal. If removal is the only option, do so with extreme caution or consider hiring a professional.

It may not seem logical that a tree would die from just one year of damage. In most cases, it is not a single year that gets the trees but stresses over multiple years. Look back over the last five to seven years of the tree’s life. How many drought cycles did it experience? How many times was it diseased or defoliated from insect pressure? Was it ever in standing water for a period? Even short term stresses (like a month of hot/dry weather during July of 2019 in an otherwise wet summer) and multiple stresses begin to add up over time. Couple multiple stressors with years when the recovery time after drought going in to fall was not very long, or a late spring frost burned leaves back, and all of a sudden, it can be more than the tree can take.

If trees are lost, now is a great time to start thinking about replacements as well. Both the K-State Research & Extension Horticulture Department and Kansas Forest Service have great resources to assist as you select replacements. Drop a line if you are interested in them by e-mailing [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu) or calling any of our three District Offices.