

K-State Research and Extension, Harvey County, PO Box 583, Newton, KS. 67114
K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Horticulture News

By: Scott Eckert, Harvey County Extension Agent, Horticulture

Current Date: 11/16/20

Release Date: as soon as possible

Sunscald and frost cracks

Fall is a great time to work outside and do gardening chores like planting a new tree. It seems like an easy enough job to do but there are things to consider to ensure the new tree survives the early years. You may have to protect the trunk from sunscald and frost cracks.

Young trees with thin, smooth bark, such as maple or linden, are susceptible to sunscald damage. This injury usually occurs in late winter when tree trunks are exposed to sunlight and warm temperatures during the day followed by a sudden drop in temperature after sunset. Large, irregular or elongate sections of the bark on the southwest side of the tree are killed.

Frost cracks are longitudinal splits in the bark and wood caused, in part, by old wounds and by differential contraction rates of the inner and outer wood in the trunk from exposure to temperature extremes. The trunks of young, thin-barked trees and shrubs on exposed sites should be wrapped or otherwise protected from direct or reflected sunlight during the winter months. Remove the wrap in the spring.