

**Problem:** Sunscald on Trees



**Plants Affected:** Honey locusts, fruit trees, ashes, oaks, maples, lindens and willows and other thin-barked trees are most commonly affected.

**Description:** Sunscald normally develops on the south or southwest side of the tree during late winter. Sunny, warm winter days may heat the bark to relatively high temperatures. Research done in Georgia has shown that the southwest side of the trunk of a peach tree can be 40 degrees warmer than shaded bark. This warming action can cause a loss of cold hardiness of the bark tissue resulting in cells becoming active. These cells then become susceptible to lethal freezing when the temperature drops at night. The damaged bark tissue becomes sunken and discolored in late spring. Damaged bark will eventually crack and slough off.

**Recommendations:**

Trees will often recover but will benefit from special care (especially watering during dry weather). Applying plastic or paper tree wrap from the ground to the start of the first branches can protect recently planted trees. This should be done in October to November. Remove the wrap in the spring (late March). Paint may be substituted for tree wrap. Use a whitewash solution made of diluting white, interior latex (not acrylic) paint with an equal amount of water and apply to the trunk.

**References:**

1. [Sunscald Injury or Southwest Winter Injury on Deciduous Trees](#), Utah State University, NR/FF/021
2. [Environmental Injury: Sunscald and Sunburn on Trees](#), Washington State University, FS197E

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