ADVERTORIAL

Remember the Drought of 2012? The Trees Do.

Be On the Lookout for Delayed Drought Symptoms in 2013

by Fuzz Martin, EPIC Creative

Steven Katovich, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

The United States has not seen a drought like the one we experienced in 2012 since the 1930s. Half of the country experienced moderate to extreme drought conditions for the majority of the year. The extreme dry conditions and record-breaking heat meant immediate ramifications for sapling trees, devastated row crops, and emaciated lawns and gardens.

Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

In most affected regions of the country, the conditions have not improved. As of January 1, 2013, U.S. Drought Monitor reports that over half of the country remains in at least D1 (moderate) or D2 (severe) drought intensity, with approximately one third of that area in D3 (extreme) or D4 (exceptional) drought intensity. Forecasts for 2013 predict that while portions of the upper Midwest will gain some reprieve, the conditions will persist for the majority of the Midwest and Southwest.

You may have seen the immediate effects of the drought on saplings: wilting leaves, drooping branches, dropping needles, unthriftiness and general die-off. However, for more established trees, you may have yet to see the worst of the drought symptoms.

While older, more vigorous trees are better able to withstand the immediate consequences of a lack of water and nutrients, extended periods of drought can lead to residual negative effects on the health of those trees. Dry conditions can lead to root damage that is not immediately seen on leaves, branches and needles. The following season, however, growth may be stunted, buds may not develop properly and needles may drop earlier than would those of healthy trees.

In addition to delayed physiological effects, the weakened, less vigorous trees may also have a harder time defending themselves from infestations of insects such as aphids and scale. With weakened root systems, the trees may be less able to recover from infestations.

Though drought conditions in your area may improve this year, it is important to keep last year's lack of moisture in mind. Delayed drought stress symptoms may resemble those of other diseases or stress. It is essential to ensure you are treating the tree for the proper ailment.

Microinjection treatments of chelated minerals, such as those found in Mauget's Stemix® Plus, are designed to stimulate foliar and root growth, helping to correct root damage and promote the tree's natural defenses against outside stresses. A micro-injection treatment of manganese sulfate, like that in Mauget's Inject-A-Min® Manganese, can also help increase photosynthesis and respiration, as well as restore the natural color of the tree's foliage.

In addition to promoting the overall vigor of the tree, it may be necessary to also treat insect infestations. Observe trees that have been affected by the drought with extra diligence, and take measures to eliminate infestations as they arise, since the tree may not be able to do so on its own.

This past year was a hard one for trees to endure. Do your part to make sure the effects of the drought do not inhibit their long-term health.

Brian Kunkel, University of Delaware, Bugwood.org

Fuzz Martin is a copywriter at EPIC Creative, Wis. Article provided by Mauget, a leader in passive microinjection and micro-infusion tree care. To learn more about fall tree care, contact Mauget or visit www.Mauget.com.