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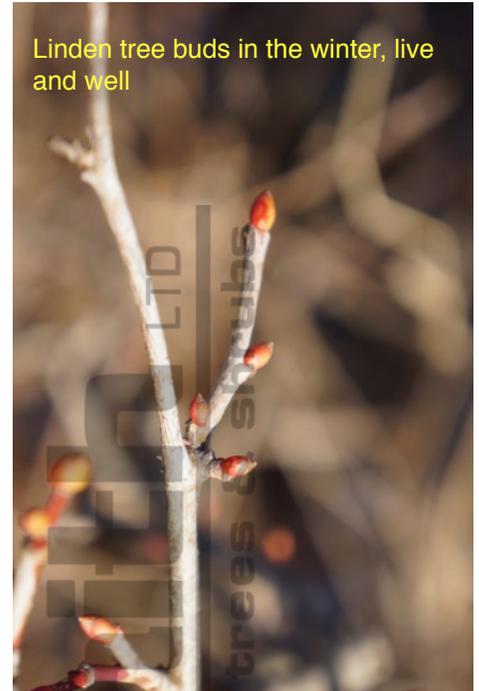
Can You Tell if a Tree is Alive in the Dead of Winter?

This is one of the most common questions we get asked this time of year as arborists. We know that the buds for next spring's flush of new growth got formed last summer when the sun's energy was really strong. It takes a lot of energy to push out all those lovely flowers and fresh green leaves each spring and trees are smart! They take advantage of the sun's energy when it's hot. Any branch on a tree, or an entire tree, that does not have live buds *right now* is obviously dead, and those that do have plump juicy buds waiting for spring's longer warmer days, is alive.

We have decades of experience looking for those healthy living buds even in February, but there are many good reasons to trim trees in the winter.

Trees like to be trimmed in the winter because:

- It allows us to see the structure of the trees and shrubs more easily without all the leaves. Often when trees suffer from storm damage in the summer those broken branches go unnoticed until the leaves are gone. It is easier to see and then correct structural defects when a tree is dormant. Young trees are especially helped by this type of winter structural pruning. It is an opportunity to select out crossing and rubbing branches and insure the tree grows up healthy and strong.
- It is healthier for the deciduous trees and shrubs to be cut back harder during the dormant season, which can save you money and time on repeated spring and or summer trimming needs for the plants.
- It prepares the plants for their healthiest show of spring color and summer growth.



Linden tree buds in the winter, live and well



Crabtree glistening in the winter ice and snow, great food for birds.

- It is the only time that we can trim American Elms and Oaks without the threat of spreading potentially fatal infectious diseases. Both American Elms and Oaks suffer from fatal fungal diseases, Dutch Elm Disease and Oak Wilt, that are carried by small insects that attack them during the growing season and are attracted to open wounds from fresh trimming cuts made by uninformed landscapers or tree trimmers.

So when the winter winds are blowing remember your trees are still growing and need attention.



A Lake County barn as a back drop for magnificent White Oaks, it is easy to see how much better the structure stands out in the dormant season of winter.

