

Landscapes dry and vulnerable

Where is all of the snow? After two bitter cold winters full of blizzards and lots of snow, this winter has been mild and dry. Is this good or bad for our landscape?

Bad.

Snow is good for our landscapes:

- Snow insulates tender plants from bitter cold temperatures.
- Snow insulates the ground, keeping it frozen. We don't want the soil to thaw during winter, then refreeze, then thaw again, and then refreeze again and again. These actions shift the soil and damage the roots of tender plants.
- Snow prevents the soil from warming up too quickly in spring. Warm soils cause plants to sprout prematurely. Plants that sprout too early in spring are subject to frost damage.



Autumn in 2011 was very dry. This winter has been very dry.

Could Year 2011—a year of historic floods—be followed by a year of drought? Nobody knows, but a little precipitation would be welcome.

By the way, where is that meteorologist who said we were going to get 200 inches of snow this winter?

Nobody likes shoveling snow and nobody likes all of the problems on the roads during blizzards, but we should all hope for a little snow soon. *DG*

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