

Getting Ready for Winter



Winter wind and sun are responsible for much of the injury to plants caused over winter. They are especially hard on broadleaf evergreens such as rhododendrons, hollies, mountain laurel and boxwood. Being evergreen, these plants are constantly losing moisture through their leaves, but since the ground is frozen, the water in the soil is unavailable. Drying winter winds and sun only serve to compound the problem. Fortunately, there are a number of ways to prevent this.

1. Make certain that the plants have plenty of water before the ground freezes as a plant in a water deficit situation is much more prone to winter injury.
2. A heavy mulch of shredded bark or leaves, pine needles or straw can be spread around the plant to a depth of 3-5".
3. To reduce the effects of the winds, wrap shrubs with burlap. This not only breaks the force of the wind, but also shades the plants from sun. Another option is to use Wilt-Pruf. It is sprayed on the plant to

reduce the loss of moisture caused by wind and sun.

4. Remember, younger plants and newly planted shrubs are more subject to winter damage so take special care of these.

Container Plants

Most hardy perennials potted in containers can survive outdoors or in an unheated garage as long as you protect them from severe cold. Try wrapping containers with burlap stuffed with straw or leaves for insulation. During winter, water your containers sparingly and do not fertilize or prune.

