

Minnesota's harsh climate is often responsible for severe damage to landscape plants. Winter sun, wind and cold temperatures can bleach and desiccate evergreen foliage. It can also damage bark and injure or kill branches, flower buds and roots. Snow and ice can break branches and topple entire trees. Salt used for deicing streets, sidewalks and parking lots is harmful to landscape plantings.

However, it's not all bleak! Landscape plants can be protected to minimize some of this injury.

Evergreens

When it's windy and sunny, evergreen foliage can lose moisture that it cannot replace with the ground frozen, resulting in browning.

Tips for Minimizing Winter Injury:

- Proper placement of evergreens at the time of planting. Yew, Hemlock and Arborvitae should not be planted on south or southwest sides of buildings or in highly exposed (windy, sunny) places.
- Water all season to ensure plants receive an average 1" moisture per week, right up until the ground freezes.
- Avoid fertilizing shrubs past mid August.
- Prop cut pine boughs or Christmas tree greens against or over evergreens to protect them from wind and sun and to catch more snow for natural protection.
- Prevent winter injury by constructing a barrier of burlap or similar material on the south, southwest and windward sides of evergreens (**Figure 1**). If a plant has exhibited injury on all sides, surround it with a barrier but leave the top open to allow for air and light penetration.
- Minimize ice or snow damage on upright evergreens, such as arborvitae and junipers, by tying branches up with Luster Leaf Product's "Soft Twist Tie."
- To prevent salt damage, do not plant trees and shrubs in highly salted areas. Avoid areas where salty runoff collects or where salt spray is prevalent, or use salt-tolerant species in these areas. Burlap barriers (Figure 1) may protect some plants from salt spray.

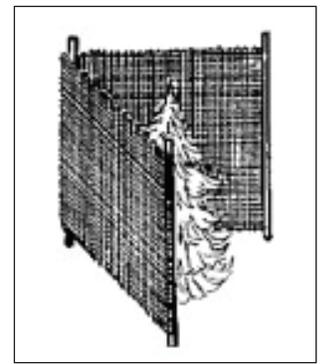


Figure 1

Trees

Newly planted and thin-barked trees (Cherry, Crabapple, Honey Locust, Linden, Maple, Mountain Ash and Plum) are most susceptible to sun scald. On cold winter days, the sun can heat up bark to the point where the tissue thaws. When clouds, hills or buildings block the sun, bark temperature drops rapidly. This kills the active tissue and frequently causes vertical splits in the bark.

Tips for Minimizing Sun Scald & Animal Damage:

- Water all season to ensure plants receive an average of 1" moisture per week, right up until the ground freezes.
- Wrap the trunk of susceptible trees in the fall with tree wrap or white plastic tubes to the lowest branch; remove in the spring after last frost.

Shrubs

Shrubs can incur shoot dieback and bud death during the winter. Flower buds are more susceptible to injury on spring flowering shrubs. A good example of this is Forsythia, where plant stems and leaf buds are hardy, but flower buds are very susceptible to cold-temperature injury.

Tips for Minimizing Dieback:

- Plants that are marginally hardy should be planted in sheltered locations.
- Water all season to ensure plants receive an average 1" of moisture per week, right up until the ground freezes.
- Avoid fertilizing shrubs past mid-August.

Perennials

Some perennial varieties need more protection than others and all will benefit some protection.

Tips for Protecting Perennials:

- Water all season to ensure plants receive an average 1" of moisture per week, right up until the ground freezes.
- Avoid fertilizing perennials past mid-August.
- Cut back perennials not grown for fall interest after the first killing frost.
- Mulch 4-6" deep early to mid-November. (Use straw, hay or shredded leaves; avoid walnut leaves.)
- Avoid mulching Bearded Iris or Peonies.
- Remove mulch in the spring once the frost is out of the ground.

Animals

Animals can do extensive damage by feeding on landscape plants during the winter.

Tips for Minimizing Animal Damage:

- Animals can be kept from gnawing on trees by encircling the trunk base with 1/4" gauge hardware cloth or screen wire (**Figure 2**). The wire cylinder should extend at least 1 foot above the deepest expected snow.
- Use Tree Guard repellent if encircling the plant is not practical.

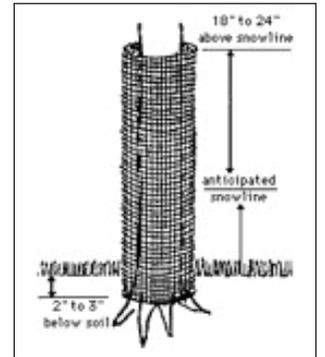


Figure 2

Related Bachman's Information Sheets

- Winterizing Hybrid Roses
- Winterizing Water Plants, Fish & Ponds

Recommended Products

- Loose Weave Burlap
- Soft Twist Tie
- Tree Wrap
- Mulch
- Tree Guard

Select source information provided by the University of Minnesota Extension, www.extension.umn.edu.

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