



Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints January 2018

Sun scald can occur on young trees as their bark is thinner than on older trees. Wrap the trunk of these more susceptible trees with commercial tree wrap or plastic tree guards available at box stores. Winter browning can affect evergreens due to foliage water loss as roots in frozen soil are unable to replace lost water, resulting in desiccation. Winter injury to evergreens can be avoided by proper placement in the landscape. Yew, hemlock, and arborvitae should not be planted on south or southwest sides of building or in a windy or sunny location. Keep evergreens watered into the fall thus preventing stress which can lead to winter injury. Decrease watering slightly in September to encourage hardening off, then water thoroughly in October before the ground freezes. Anti-desiccant sprays may be sprayed on foliage in December to prevent winter burn. Shoot and bud death in deciduous trees can occur during the winter. Avoid late summer pruning and fertilizing. Roots do not become dormant in the winter as quickly as stems, branches, and buds. Reduce root injury by mulching new trees and shrubs with six to eight inches of wood chips, but keep mulch away from the base of the trees to prevent “volcanoes”. This treatment will maintain more constant soil temperatures and prevent the repeated freezing and thawing of soil which can damage roots and heave shrubs and new plantings out of the ground. Heavy snow and ice storms cause damage by bending and breaking branches off trees and bushes. Proper pruning to eliminate multiple leaders and weak branch attachment will reduce damage. The deicing of roads and walks with salt can cause winter injury and dieback. Do not plant trees and shrubs near highly salted pavement. The planting of salt-tolerant species is an alternative. Mice, rabbits, and deer can cause damage to plants in the winter by feeding on tender twigs, bark, and foliage. The most effective repellents for rodents and deer are those that contain thiram, a common fungicide. It can be sprayed or painted on trees and shrubs, repeating application after heavy precipitation.

Plants respond differently to winter stress and each winter provides different stressful conditions. Plan your spring gardening changes looking over the garden catalogs you will receive in the mail this January, and dream of spring.

--Sandy