

The Spray Front



WILLIAM QUINN

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SEASON FALL YEAR 2012

PREPARING TREES/SHRUBS FOR WINTER

HOW TO BEST PREPARE YOUR GARDEN FOR THIS WINTER AFTER THE DROUGHT



There's no denying we experienced another harsh drought and heat wave this summer. And while most of our weather has returned to "normal," we need to keep our plants – evergreens especially - in mind going into the winter.

Our trees and plants suffered during the drought this year. If last winter is any indication of what we can expect this year – dry, below average precipitation and snowfall – then it's a good idea to prepare your plants for whatever winter may bring. Evergreens are

especially vulnerable to dry winters because they do not "go dormant" like other deciduous trees/shrubs.

The University of Illinois Extension service recommends watering evergreens up until the ground freezes.

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Cathy's Corner

Well, here we are half-way through another season. Boy has it been a challenge. The heat and drought stress has not only taken its toll on trees, plants, and turf, it has created almost unbearable working conditions for the crews. Last season we dealt with one of the wettest seasons in history. This year we were experiencing the complete opposite. As a result of the hot, dry weather, all signed landscape proposals requiring plant material has been put on hold. As soon as the weather pattern changes we will resume all new installs. I understand that many residents are eager to have their new landscaping completed. Watering has always been an issue with new landscaping; the problem seems to be that many believe that outside watering is someone else's responsibility. The frequent line I hear is "I bought this place so I didn't have to water", and



I know that all homeowner board members have all heard that line before.

Winter Perennial Care

These last few weeks of fall are typically spent winterizing our home – inside and out, including our gardens. Winterizing our gardens usually involves cutting back perennials for the coming cold months, but did you know that many perennials are better left standing over the winter?

There are several reasons you may want to decide to leave your perennials standing instead of cutting them back. During their dormant season, several perennials have attractive foliage that beats looking at bare ground/mulch! The birds that do not migrate will also thank you as they enjoy the seeds of these plants all winter.

With some hardy perennials, they actually stand a better chance of winter survival if left alone until the spring time. Mums, coral bells, and hydrangeas fit in this category. It seems that leaving the foliage protects the crown from frost.

If you seem to forget where your perennials are located in the spring, you'll thank yourself for not cutting them back this fall. They're easier to locate when the foliage is still attached to the roots!

Please keep in mind the landscaping on your properties is most likely your association's largest expense. During this extreme weather it's important to take care of trees and shrubs first. They cost the most to replace. No one wants to lose a well established shade tree due to lack of water. As far as shrubs, evergreens are also costly to replace. Many think that established evergreens can handle drought stress; no evergreen can withstand long term water deficiencies. Deciduous shrubs are next on the list of priorities. Turf falls to the bottom of the list as it should recover when the weather changes. It is too soon to tell what to expect in the long term in regards to this summer's weather. I hope we don't experience what we did in 2005. It's a wait and see what's next game.

I would like to thank all of you who have been so generous to your maintenance crews during the hot weather. The bottles of water and pop mean a lot to the maintenance crews.

On really hot days, we have either ice cream or Popsicle parties when the crews return at the end of the day. In a typical year

Cathy

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PREPARING

Lack of moisture available to evergreens during the winter could result in desiccation, wind burn, or "sun burn."

Trees and shrubs located in exposed sites – where not protected from wind or direct sunlight – will benefit from watering as well. You may want to consider adding a "wind breaker" around these plants to protect them in case of a less than ideal winter. Some options for material include burlap, snow fence, silt fence, or spraying an anti-transpirant (purchased at any garden center) before the freeze.

Aside from Mother Nature, plants may also need to be protected from wildlife. Rabbits and deer are the two most common "enemies" of our landscape during the winter months. For trees with soft bark like crabapples or cherry trees, plastic wraps found at garden centers will eliminate the threat of wildlife damage. In



Chicken Wire Fencing Protects Plants

perennial beds, it's recommended to protect the entire bed with chicken wire fencing rather than individual plants. Getting these protections in place early is key as it will alter the habits of the wildlife before the winter kicks in.

With a little care and prevention now, your plants should revive heartily and healthily next spring!

Where's the Impatiens?

A rather recent disease is impacting our continued use of Impatiens. Becoming widespread last year Downy Mildew is attacking our annual Impatiens by stunting growth, yellowing leaves, and eventually producing barren stalks with one or two yellow leaves left.

What's more concerning about this disease is that it will overwinter in the soil affecting next year's planting of Impatiens. Surprisingly the New Guinea Impatien is resistant – but overwhelmingly too expensive to be a suitable alternative.

Fungicides aren't a viable solution to the



problem either. As of 2012, until greenhouse growers have figured out a solution to the downy mildew problem, we will be phasing out Impatiens in our color displays by replacing them with various mixes of annuals.

