

WINTER Protection

Fall is the best time to plan for the potential ravages of winter. Cold weather plant protection takes a little pre-planning and some materials to do it well, but your customers will surely appreciate your expertise on the subject. In mild and temperate climates, like ours, winter protection usually just means re-mulching and dividing early spring bloomers. Be the expert and make suggestions to your clients to mitigate the potential damage by assessing their landscapes beforehand, and proactively formulate a game plan on how to spring into action when the weather dictates. Depending upon the severity, here are some suggestions.

Cold Snap: One of the easiest and most effective ways to protect sensitive plants from the cold weather is to apply a fresh 2"-3" layer of any of SBS' hardwood mulch (12 varieties on hand to choose from) on top of whatever mulch you already have in place. SBS' Rustic Cut Hardwood Mulch is a particularly good choice for this application due to its varied texture and

inexpensive pricing. Another easy step would be to water the soil (not the leaves or stalk) to help retain heat and help the plant's roots and lower branches survive. Wet soils can prevent freeze injury to roots because moist soil holds more heat than dry soil.



Light Freeze: You may be able to protect plants from a short freeze simply by covering them with a blanket. For added protection you can place plastic over the blankets to better help keep warmth in. Be sure to have the blankets (and plastic) removed first thing in the morning to avoid condensation build-up that can freeze again under the covering. For tender young tree trunks, wrap with burlap to prevent winter sunscald.



Snow: Gently tie long limbs in closer towards the center stalk of the plant, or use stakes to prop them up, to avoid breakage should snow build-up on them. In addition, suggest to your clients that they keep potted plants on dollies so they can wheel them to a sheltered location or indoors when temperatures drop, as containers are particularly susceptible to freezing.



Deep Freeze: Use a string of Christmas lights around the planting area for additional heat. Gallon jugs of warm water can be placed under the blankets each evening to radiate warmth. As a more elaborate solution, an insulation structure can be created as a way to encapsulate an entire plant or garden area by tying up the plant(s) as neatly as possible to shrink its footprint, then drive stakes that are as tall as the plant into the ground around the plant or garden. Wrap the stakes in burlap so that the plant(s) appears to be enclosed on all sides and from above. As soon as the freeze passes, remove the covering so that the area can get the sunlight and airflow it needs.



Did you know...

Soil that is not covered with vegetative matter is vulnerable.

Soil is being swept and washed away 10 to 40 times faster than it is being replenished.

Call the SBS staff to order up our heat-holding materials at a very special price!

(see SPECIALS on home page)