

Winterizing Newly Planted Trees & Shrubs

Fall is a great time to plant or transplant trees and shrubs. With a little extra care, your plants will brave the low temperatures throughout the cold, gray season.

1. Continue watering newly planted trees and shrubs until temperatures are consistently cold, but be carefully not to overwater. Trees and shrubs are preparing for dormancy and are slowing their uptake of water and nutrients. Be sure to check plants under eaves.
2. Mulch around trees and bushes, covering an area at least as wide as the branch spread. A 2"-4" layer of shredded leaves, straw, fine bark or compost helps insulate the soil and prevent winter "heave"--the process of freezing and thawing which can literally wrench plants and roots out of the ground. Do not pile mulch thickly up against the branches or trunk.
3. Wrap. In exposed areas with strong winds/winter sun, try wrapping the trunks of young saplings and smooth-barked trees with insulation, burlap or tree wrap up to the first branch to insulate against the cold. If necessary, use wind screens or fabric wraps.
4. Anti-transpirant sprays may help prevent dehydration of evergreen shrubs in very windy/dry areas.
5. Prune any dead, diseased or damaged branches. Delay severe pruning until late winter/early spring.
6. A dormant oil spray (after you prune) may be a good idea for deciduous trees, ornamentals, fruit trees and shrubs. Winter weather encourages destructive pests to snuggle in and wait for spring to continue their lifecycles.

SEE ALSO OUR HANDOUT ON WINTERIZING YOUR CONTAINER PLANTS.