

Preparing Tree and Shrubs Beds for the Winter Months

A. Hydration

- Dry conditions have shocked your plants
- Good hydration will strengthen your plants

A. Mulch Management

- Root coverage
- Avoid tilling (unless amending soil)
- Avoid covering trunk or stems of trees and shrubs
- Examine mulch compression
- Hook or fluff mulch to evaluate mulch depth (this will also help with hydration and fertilizer application)

C. Fertilization

- Proper fertilization can greatly increase the strength of your plants' immune system
- Examine trees and shrubs for signs of deficiencies (i.e. discolored leaves, lack of foliage)
- Select proper fertilizer
 - Trees and shrubs planted this year- Root n Grow (root growth stimulant fertilizer)
 - Established trees- 5-10-5, Osmocote, Ross Root fertilizer (or any tree or shrub fertilizer with fairly balanced levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash)

D. Weeds are robbing your plants

- Both Pre- and Post-Emergence Herbicides can be applied in the fall
- Removing fallen leaves can help prevent the spread of fungi and diseases
- Dormant oil and lime sulfur will eliminate most detrimental insects

E. Pruning

- Mid to late fall is a fine time to prune
- Remove:
 - Dead or damaged growth
 - Diseased growth
 - Unwanted growth
- Proper pruning keeps your plant healthy
- Prune for desired shape
- **Avoid any unnecessary pruning on spring-flowering shrubs**

Preparing Several Common Shrubs for the Winter Months

A. Lilac

- Avoid fall pruning as most lilacs set buds at this time of year (general rule of thumb with spring-blooming shrubs)
- Best time to prune is as soon as blooming stops late spring

B. Forsythia

- Again, fall pruning is discouraged due to buds setting in the fall
- In most cases, forsythia lose their blooms before new foliage growth comes on, this is the easiest and best time to prune

C. Ornamental Grasses

- Pruning time is flexible, but spring pruning is recommended as the aged grass blades form an organic insulator
- Most shrub fertilizers work just as well for ornamental grass (i.e. Osmocote)
- Tip: wrapping rope or twine around ornamental grass blades prior to pruning makes for an easier cleanup
- Grasses can be divided much like a hosta if they are well established and the plant is getting too wide (use Root n Grow on transplanted part of plant)

D. Rose of Sharon

- Late bloomer, late to put on green growth
- Pruning any time after blooming is done, and even early in the spring, just as the plant comes out of dormancy (pruning in early spring usually promotes more blooms)

E. Knockout Rose

- Low maintenance shrub
- Fall is a fine time to prune, just after blooming stops
- Deadheading can be done during blooming, but is not required for the rose to re-bloom
- Fertilization with 5-10-5 is very important once roses stop blooming in the fall, as blooming has taken a lot of energy out of your roses

F. Hydrangea

- Pruning time and degree vary with hydrangea family
- Some hydrangea's bloom color can be altered through soil acidity, while others have a set color

G. Spirea

- Flexible with prune time (any major pruning can be done in the fall or early spring)
- Pruning should be followed with an application of general shrub fertilizer (Osmocote or 5-10-5)
- Bloom period can be prolonged with regular deadheading

H. Boxwood

- Very flexible with pruning (minor pruning can be done almost any time of the year while major pruning is best done in early spring, as this will encourage new growth)
- Very low maintenance, very flexible with sun exposure
- Does well with general shrub fertilizer or root-growth fertilizer if still a new planting

I. Taxus

- Also low maintenance
- Most varieties will require pruning from time to time to keep the shrub from becoming "leggy"
- Flexible with sun exposure
- Densiformis- easy to keep compact, Hicksii can get large if not pruned

J. Barberry

- Early spring pruning is ideal (as this will promote new growth)
- Fertilizer can be applied in early spring as well
- Wear gloves!
- Best foliage color in full sun, as this keeps the foliage that burgundy color