

# GNOME

*Landscapes, Design, Masonry & Maintenance*

## FALL/WINTER PLANT CARE

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Gnome trees, shrubs, and perennials are planted using the best techniques available. A bit of extra attention during the Fall and Winter will help promote on-going plant health and well being in the new growing season.

### WINTER PROTECTION:

Considerable variability exists among plant species in their tolerance to cold but there are a few basic things we can do to get plants through the winter:

- Keep plants healthy during the growing season with proper maintenance and watering.
- Use commercially available anti-desiccant products such as WiltPruf and Moisturin on evergreens and broadleaved evergreens to reduce water loss through leaves.
- Loosely wrap plants in exposed areas with burlap to slow desiccation. Plants to be burlaped include:
  - Dwarf Alberta Spruce
  - Andromeda
  - Arborvite
  - Boxwood
  - Climbing Roses
  - Dawn Redwood
  - Daphne
  - Inkberry
  - Japanese Umbrella Pine
  - Leucothoe
  - Mountain Laurel
  - Rhododendron
  - Yew

### WATERING (THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO).

The plant should not be allowed to dry out for an extended period of time. We recommend plants receive an inch of

water above the ground per week. All species of trees and shrubs entering winter without adequate soil and tissue moisture or with low food reserves become more susceptible to low temperature injury.

Signs that indicate your plant is suffering from moisture fatigue are wilting leaves, yellowing margins on the leaves, browning tips, premature leaf or needle drop, and poor overall color.

A common myth is that when a plant goes dormant in the Fall, dropping its leaves or needles, it no longer needs to be watered. This couldn't be further from the truth. **YOU MUST CONTINUE WATERING UNTIL THE GROUND FREEZES!** A plant that is not watered, or dries up before the ground freezes, will surely die. Evergreens and broadleaved evergreens are especially prone to winter burn from winter winds as they continue to lose water through their leaves even in cold weather—causing desiccation injury.

### **Flowering Trees:**

Prune out all dead or injured branches or branches that cross and rub against each other. When pruning, keep in mind the ultimate shape you are trying to achieve.

Always prune above the "collar" area of a branch. Any closer and you may injure the tree. Any further away and you will have unsightly stubs that will invite problems. The collar is the area that connects a branch to a trunk (or a smaller branch to a larger one), and will usually have a thickened swell or a bark pattern that is different from the trunk and the branch.

### **Evergreen Shrubs:**

Evergreen shrubs – Junipers, Yews, Arborvitae, Rhododendrons, etc. should have any dead branches pruned as necessary.

Fertilizing with an acid-based fertilizer such as Miracid or Hollytone using manufacturer's directions is a good method for immediate results but for a lasting result that helps to build your soil try top dressing with bagged manure or compost. **DO NOT feed these plants after July 15th until the ground has frozen.**

Winter protection may be of value to the newly planted perennials. Simply mulching with straw or evergreen boughs, after the ground is frozen, can help prevent heaving caused by alternating freeze/thaw cycles.

Deadheading or removing the spent flowers will help to neaten up the area, lessen the incidence of fungus and will contribute to the future vigor of the plants.

### **Roses:**

In order to keep roses such as Grandiflora and Tea Roses in Maine through the winter, do not cut blooms after September 1st. Sometime during mid to late October, just as the ground is freezing, you want to mulch heavily around the plant. The method we employ is to take a mixture of loam and peat and pile it a foot and a half high an approximately six inches around the whole stem. Then, in order to hold it in place, put straw vertically around the mound and tie in place with twine. For added protection, put a burlap cap on the exposed branches. Remove the mulch in mid-March or when the danger of heavy killing frost (15 degrees F or below) has passed. A heavy May fertilizing with compost or aged manure is recommended.

***If you desire, we can provide you with a proposal to maintain your plantings and yard, please give us a call at 207-781-2955 and ask for Chace Campbell.***

Edit this entry.

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