



**Vandermeer  
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## **Landscape care, Maintenance and Winterizing**

### **Water**

Correct watering is the most crucial ingredient in proper plant care. As a general rule, watering of new plants should be done no more than once every seven to 10 days, depending on weather conditions. Larger trees can be watered less often, (every 12 to 15 days) providing ample water each time. A preferred method is to let the hose trickle for one or two hours at the base of a tree into a "saucer" of earth. *Remember -- more new plants die of overwatering than any other single cause.*

### **Pruning**

Most first-year pruning is done before you receive your plants. The best time to trim evergreens is in the spring (mid-May to mid-June) while plants are in a period of active growth. Besides providing the desired shape, this also encourages new growth. A second trimming can be done in the fall (late August through early October) to give plants the extra protection they will require against winter kill, as well as help to guard against snow and ice damage.

### **Fertilizer**

Feeding new plants is most important. We recommend an initial transplant fertilizer with root hormone to stimulate new roots and a general fertilizer such as 20-20-20 on a year-round basis for all plant material at least once every six to eight weeks, up until early August. This encourages new root and foliage growth on all types of plants, plus new flowers on flowering plants.

### **Winterizing**

#### **Evergreens**

Yews and Alberta spruce are the most susceptible to winter wind and sunburn. It is, therefore, advisable to keep these plants wrapped with burlap from top to bottom, beginning in the late fall. Never use plastic as a wrap -- even in the winter months plants must be able to "breathe." Evergreens should be well-watered before the severe ground frost of mid-December to guard against desiccation (drying-out) caused by cold winter winds.

Upright evergreens, such as Skyrocket, Mountbatten and Spartan juniper suffer the most damage from the weight of snow on their branches. This will not usually kill the plant, but can make it unsightly the following year. The best protection is to cover the juniper with Vexar netting. Apply in late fall and leave on the plant until the threat of snow has passed in early spring.

#### **Rhododendrons and Azaleas**

These plants are very susceptible to wind, sun and snow damage through the winter months, especially if they have been planted in an unprotected location. Be sure to cover the root area with up to eight inches of mulch, preferably oak leaves or peat moss. Then build a shelter around each plant with burlap to keep out the wind and the sun.

#### **Roses**

Cut your roses back to approximately 50 cm by removing all frozen buds after the first heavy frost. Remove all leaves as much as possible and dust the lower branches with a general fungicide. Using a rose collar, build fresh garden soil 25 cm high around each rose bush. Do not use manure, peat moss or other material high in organic matter. Once the soil is slightly frozen, a light application of straw or other protection is also beneficial, but should not be substitutes for the soil itself.

#### **Climbing Roses**

Climbing roses should be pruned only very slightly in the fall by removing the frozen buds and tips of the most tender growth. The branches of climbing roses should be tied together and wrapped in burlap. Again, never use plastic. Build up soil around the roots the same as for other roses.

#### **Lawns**

Apply fall fertilizer any time in the fall. If weeds are a problem, consider applying fall fertilizer plus weeder. Fall fertilizing helps to strengthen your lawn and the lawn's roots, providing stamina to help it survive the long winter. The last mowing should be done very close to the ground and the clippings raked away. This will prevent fungal diseases from destroying grass roots over the winter.