Winter Burn on Evergreens

Winter can be hard on any plants but it can be especially hard on our evergreens since they keep their foliage. When evergreens are damaged in the winter it is referred to as “winter burn”. We most commonly see winter injury on pine or juniper trees however boxwood, holly, magnolia, and azalea shrubs can also be damaged. Winter injury is caused by the desiccation of the leaves and needles, usually when cold winter winds blow by the needles causing them to lose moisture faster than the plant can replace it. The needles or leaves then dry out and die. This happens often during dry winters, prolonged cold spells, or when the ground is frozen so the plant can’t take up enough water. There are a few ways we can prevent winter injury, the first is to water during warm spells to help keep the plants hydrated (if there has been adequate moisture this is not necessary). The second option is to wrap smaller, delicate plants with burlap to prevent damage by the wind. Finally, Antidesiccant sprays can be applied in mid-winter if desired and may provide some protection through the winter. Winter injury can also be caused by salt applications on sidewalks. The salt dries out the needles and leaves of the plants and causes similar damage. Often this damage doesn’t show up till spring when the plants start to grow again. Most of the time plants will grow out of the injury, but they may look sad for a while. Happy Growing!
Caring for Your Holiday Plants

The holidays have come and gone but the plants we purchased during that time are still around. While some plants purchased for the holidays are only around for a short time, for example Christmas trees, others can bring us joy for many years if cared for properly.

Poinsettias are one of the most common and probably the most popular of the plants sold around the holidays. They can make an easy-to-care-for, gorgeous houseplant if you decide to keep them after the holidays. In their native range, poinsettias develop woody stems and grow to be the size of small trees, so one of the first steps to their indoor care is to transplant them into a larger pot to allow the roots room to grow. Water them when the top inch of soil gets dry and provide plenty of light. Trim the poinsettias back around Valentine’s Day to prevent them from becoming leggy and start fertilizing them at half-strength. Once the weather warms up they can be moved outside and slowly transitioned to full sun for the summer. Water and fertilize regularly through the summer till September when you bring them back indoors. To encourage a bushy plant with more blooms prune them back about Father’s Day for the final time.

Holiday cacti are probably the longest-lived of the plants you can purchase for the holidays with some living to be well over 100 years old or longer. Holiday cacti are tropical cacti that prefer to be watered when the top two inches of the soil get dry. Similar to the poinsettia, wait to fertilize them till February and then fertilize regularly throughout the growing season till they set blooms in the fall. These cacti can be moved outside once nighttime temperatures are above 50 degrees, but keep them in an area where they get morning sun and afternoon shade only. They will burn in full afternoon sun in our area. The plants should be brought inside in the fall when the weather is cool and treated like a houseplant. Holiday cacti prefer to be pot bound and should only be transplanted every couple years into slightly larger pots.

Amaryllis are the final holiday plant to talk about. While not as long-lived as the others, amaryllis can provide years of enjoyment in the home. The secret to getting them to rebloom is to have healthy plants. Once they have finished blooming, cut off the blooms but leave the bloom stalk. A green stem will continue to promote photosynthesis, which creates energy that is stored in the bulb for future leaf growth and flowers. Start fertilizing at half strength in February and continue fertilizing through the summer. Move the amaryllis outdoors in the summer and treat it like any other outdoor plant till fall. If you bought a bulb wrapped in wax you must remove the wax or the plant will die. Take a sharp knife and cut a “v” in the wax at the base then slowly peel the wax off the bulb, leaving as much of the brown papery covering as possible. Place the bulb on a damp paper towel for 4 to 6 weeks till the bulb has 3 to 4 roots that are three inches long. Transplant the bulb into a pot about two inches larger than the diameter of the bulb. This process may take several months but the bulb should live. If your amaryllis does not bloom in the spring, it didn’t store enough nutrients the previous growing season.
Systemic Insecticide Use on Houseplants

By Chris Stuhlsatz – Master Gardener K-State Research & Extension Butler County

Systemic houseplant insect control is a type of insecticide that is absorbed by the plant through its roots and transported throughout its system. These treatments target pests that may be difficult to reach or eliminate with traditional sprays or contact insecticides. This type of insecticide is effective against a variety of insects, including aphids, whiteflies, mealybugs, and scales.

The most common types of systemic houseplant insect control are:

- **Granules**: These are small pellets that are sprinkled on the soil and watered in.
- **Liquids**: These are concentrated solutions that are mixed with water and applied to the soil or foliage.

Systemic houseplant insect control is a convenient and effective way to control pests on your indoor plants. However, it is important to read and follow the label instructions carefully, as these products can be harmful to humans and pets if not used properly. Here are some of the benefits of using systemic houseplant insect control:

- **Effective**: Systemic insecticides are absorbed by the plant and transported throughout its system, so they are effective against insects that are feeding on the leaves, stems, and roots.
- **Long-lasting**: Systemic insecticides can provide protection for up to 8 weeks, depending on the product.
- **Convenient**: Systemic insecticides are easy to apply, and they do not require spraying.
- **Safe for plants**: Systemic insecticides are safe for most houseplants when used as directed.

Here are some of the drawbacks of using systemic houseplant insect control:

- **May harm beneficial insects**: Systemic insecticides can harm beneficial insects, such as ladybugs, springtails, and lacewings.
- **Can be harmful to humans and pets**: Systemic insecticides can be harmful to humans and pets if not used properly.

If you are considering using systemic houseplant insect control, it is important to weigh the benefits and drawbacks carefully. You should also consult with a nursery professional or your Extension office to determine if this type of product is right for your plants. Always make sure you have correctly identified the insect before using any chemical treatments.
**Upcoming Events**

**Garden Hour Webinars:**
- **February 7th** - Gardening for a Changing Climate
- **March 6th** - Selecting and Planting Fruit Trees
- **April 3rd** - Companion Plants in the Garden
- **May 1st** - Understanding Water Sources for the Garden

**Upcoming Classes:**
- **January 24th at 7 pm** - Starting a New Landscape, Extension Office, El Dorado
- **February 10th at 10 am** - Preparing for the Growing Season, Andover Public Library
- **February 22nd at 6 pm** - Starting Seeds, Augusta Public Library
- **February 27th at 6 pm** - Preparing for the Growing Season, Bradford Memorial Library, El Dorado

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**Eggshell Sprouts**

These little guys are pretty darn cute and make a very simple project to do with kids or grandkids this winter. Everything this project requires is easily found around the house. You can also use this method to start fruit or vegetable seeds for your garden this season!!

**Supplies:**
- Cleaned out Eggshells
- Potting Soil or Cotton Balls
- Seeds
- Markers
- Stickers, Googly Eyes, Decorations, ect. (Optional)
- Egg Carton

**Directions**

1. Empty out the egg shells and wash the remaining egg out with water.
   
   Poke a small hole in the bottom for drainage.

2. Carefully decorate the eggshell to make a face or design. (Tip: Use the egg carton to hold the eggs during this step)

3. Fill most of the way with potting soil or use a damp cotton ball in the bottom of the eggshell.

4. Carefully sprinkle the seeds in the eggshell.

5. Place the egg carton with eggs in a bright sunny window and water when the soil or cotton ball start to dry out.

6. Watch for the seeds to sprout!!

7. If planting outside, wait till after the last frost then plant the entire shell in the ground, slightly cracking the egg. (Remove the stickers or googly eyes before this step).

8. Enjoy the green sprouts during the winter!
LAWN & LANDSCAPE CARE
FOR NEW HOMEBUYERS

Buying a home can be overwhelming and that is without factoring in that you now have a yard to care for. While we can't help with the house maintenance we can help you figure out what to do outside of the house. This class is designed to help you figure out the basics of lawn and landscape care, determine what plants are currently growing around your home, and how to maintain them or create a whole new landscape. This program is free of charge.

TOPICS
Basic Lawn Care
Low Maintenance Lawn Care
Basic Landscape Design
Plant Identification
Resources for picking out plants

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024
7:00 P.M.

BUTLER COUNTY
COMMUNITY/4-H BUILDING
200 North Griffith Street
El Dorado, KS 67042

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PLANTING SEEDS OF CHANGE:
5 ECO-FRIENDLY GARDENING EVENTS

GARDEN MAGIC UNVEILED
Feb. 10th, 10–11:30am

SPECIAL STORY TIME, SEED BOMBS
March 12th, 10:30am

SEED EXCHANGE
March 12th, 5:30–7:00pm

PLANT EXCHANGE EVENT
May 16th, 5:30–7:00pm

FREE FOR ALL AGES!
To register, please email: tlarsen@andoverlibrary.org

EARTH DAY VIDEO CONTEST
Submission April 19th
Screening: April 26th, 6pm