



HOME AND GARDEN INFORMATION CENTER

University of Maryland Extension

12005 Homewood Road • Ellicott City, MD 21024 • 800-342-2507 • www.hgic.umd.edu

Woody Ornamental Landscape Plants Tips

Culture

- Nursery stock trees and shrubs can be planted until the ground freezes. Carefully examine trees and shrubs prior to purchase to assess quality. Carefully remove container stock plants to examine root systems. Avoid shrubs with dead roots or those that are circling the stem or trunk. These can girdle the trunk later. If you buy container grown plants be sure to spread the roots out in the planting hole. (Cut down the sides to encourage new root growth.) With balled and burlap stock cut the twine around the ball and cut away the nylon or burlap wrapping.
- It is too late, however, to transplant trees or shrubs. Be sure to keep all plants well watered during dry periods this fall, especially those that are newly planted or transplanted. Avoid planting problem trees like silver maple, Bradford pear and Norway maple.
- Fall is also a good time to fertilize trees, especially if they have not been fertilized in 3-4 years and seem to be slow growing. Broadcast 1 to 1.5 lbs. of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. The granular fertilizer should be applied under the tree's canopy and extend 8-10 ft. out from the canopy. Use a low phosphorus fertilizer. It is rarely necessary to fertilize a mature tree. Newly planted and very young trees and shrubs benefit the most from tree fertilization. Trees and shrubs can be fertilized as long as the ground is not frozen. Trees that are surrounded by lawn do not need fertilization. Follow lawn fertilizer recommendations.
- Trees and shrubs can be pruned now. Remove dead, diseased branches and make any necessary cosmetic cuts. Wait until your shrubs are dormant for all other corrective and cosmetic pruning. Flower buds are forming or are already formed on spring flowering shrubs. Do not prune spring flowering shrubs until after the bloom period if you do not want to sacrifice next spring's bloom.
- Mulch should be applied only 2-3 inches deep around ornamental plants and kept away from shrub and tree trunks. Deep mulch makes a favorable site for voles. If the mulch is next to woody plant trunks, the voles will feed on and damage bark and wood.
- You may notice interior older leaves yellowing and dropping from rhododendrons and other evergreen shrubs. This is normal for this time of year.
- Do not handle the hairy poison ivy vines wrapped around trees. This is a good time to sever poison ivy vines at ground level and paint the cut end with full-strength "Brush-B-Gon." Be careful not to bring firewood into the house with poison ivy vines attached.

Educating People To Help Themselves

Local Governments - U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating

Insect pests

- Hemlocks infested with the wooly adelgid can be sprayed with horticultural oil anytime between now and March provided the temperatures will be above freezing for 24 hours after application. Adelgids are aphid-like sucking pests that appear as white, waxy masses. Heavy infestations can debilitate trees, particularly when they are stressed.
- Shade trees and shrubs that have had scale problems can be sprayed with horticultural oil after leaves drop. Again note, the temperature must remain above freezing for 24 hours after spraying oil. Follow label instructions.
- Continue to remove bagworm bags from trees and shrubs. Dispose of them in the trash, do not leave them on the ground.
- The egg masses of the Eastern tent caterpillar should also be pruned out. They resemble shiny, black styrofoam and can be seen on the ends of wild cherry and crabapple trees.
- Spruce spider mites are active again on evergreen trees. Monitor for this pest by tapping branches while holding a piece of white paper underneath. Look for moving specks. They can be controlled with ultra-fine horticultural oil. Follow label instructions.

**Do you have a plant or insect pest question?
Call the Home and Garden Information Center
1-800-342-2507
www.hgic.umd.edu**