



HOME & GARDEN

Home and Garden information center • 12005 Homewood Road • Ellicott City, MD 21042 • 1-800-342-2507

October 2009

Woody Ornamental Landscape Plant Tips

Culture

- It is generally not necessary to fertilize established trees and shrubs. If you do, wait to fertilize until late October or early November. Early fertilization may produce a flush of late, weak growth that will not harden off properly, predisposing it to winter injury.
- Mulches should be applied only 2-3 inches deep and kept away from tree trunks. Mature trees do not benefit from being mulched. They should only be mulched to keep lawn mowers and string trimmers away from trunks.
- Now is a good time to plant trees. However, dogwood, tulip poplar, pin oak and evergreens should not be dug up and moved in the fall; they will fail to establish a root system. Be sure to keep all newly planted or transplanted trees and shrubs watered during dry periods this fall. If you plan to plant new trees this fall select slow growing species and avoid fast-growing trees such as Bradford pear, silver maple and Lombardy poplar, which tend to produce weak branches that break or split in storms. If you buy container grown trees be sure to spread the roots out in the planting hole. With balled and burlap stock cut the twine around the ball and cut away the nylon or burlap wrapping.
- Never carry a tree by its trunk, this can damage the roots; carry them by their root ball or container. For more detailed information, refer to our University of MD Extension publications HG24 entitled "Planting Tips for Trees"
- Tree and shrub branches should be pruned at this time only if they are dead or damaged. Wait until after all the leaves have dropped for all other corrective and cosmetic pruning. Click here to view our publication for correct pruning techniques:
- Flower buds are forming or are already formed on spring flowering shrubs. To prevent reducing next year's bloom, don't prune spring flowering shrubs until after the bloom period.
- You may notice older leaves dropping from rhododendrons and other evergreen shrubs. This is normal for this time of year.
- Poison ivy leaves turn red in the fall. Cut poison ivy plants down to the ground or spray with glyphosate or "Brush-B-Gon" herbicide. Another possibility is to cut the vines to the ground and paint the cut surfaces with Round-Up or Brush-B Gon as soon as the cut is made. Do not handle the hairy poison ivy vines wrapped around trees. Always wear protective clothing and gloves, and note that even once the vines are dead, the irritant oil in roots and vines can still produce a rash.

Insects

- Bagworm larvae have pupated inside the bags. Remove and dispose of bags hanging from trees and shrubs. Mid-June through mid-July is the ideal time to control larvae with the organic insecticide B.t.. Please refer to our publication HG32 "Bagworms and Their Control"
- Spruce spider mites are active on evergreen trees in the fall. 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.
- The hemlock woolly adelgid is active on hemlocks. A similar pest is present on larch trees. Adelgids are aphid-like sucking pests that appear as small, white, waxy, cottony-looking masses. Heavy infestations can debilitate trees, particularly when they

Educating People To Help Themselves

Local Governments - U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating

The University of Maryland is equal opportunity. The University's policies, programs, and activities are in conformance with pertinent Federal and State laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, and disability. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990; or related legal requirements should be directed to the Director of Personnel/Human Relations, Office of the Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Symons Hall, College Park, MD 20742.

are stressed. Ultra-fine horticultural oil is a safe and effective insecticide to use but should not be applied when temperatures are below 40° F. Do not apply if humidity is high. Thorough coverage of the foliage is essential to achieving good control. A dormant oil spray in February or March will also help to kill over-wintering adults.

Disease

- Black spot on roses continues to be a problem. Continue to apply a labeled fungicide through the fall until all the leaves have dropped.
- Powdery mildew is a common late summer and early fall leaf disease of dogwood, lilac and other landscape plants. Affected leaves turn white and droop. No fungicide sprays will be effective now. However, next year you can apply a labeled fungicide, or use a horticultural oil labeled for powdery mildew control and follow the label for interval of applications. Try to select resistant cultivars when planting new landscape plants.
- In the cooler sometimes wetter weather of October harmless toadstools and other mushrooms may be plentiful around tree root systems. However, destructive wood rotting organisms produce conks, which resemble fleshy, shelf-like structures, on tree trunks. Affected trees may be suffering from extensive wood decay and should be inspected for trunk soundness by a licensed arborist.