

APOLOGY

Mr. Toro Snow Pup.

Mr. Tim Miles, Superintendent at Joliet Country Club, is a happy man. He won you as one of the door prizes that were given away at the Midwest Association annual dance at River Forest Country Club. Sorry about the late notice.

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RODENTS

by Stanley Rachesky

Entomologist — University of Illinois

Rodents cause problems to golf superintendents not only when they find their way inside your buildings, but they can really cost you some money when they start eating your shrubs. After the first ground covering snow of the year, rats, mice, and rabbits will become more aggressive in their hunt for food. Ornamental trees, fruit trees and shrubs always appear to be one of the prime targets of these little animals. Golf superintendents should plan to protect these plants now, if you have not already done so.

When these little creatures completely eat the bark off around the trunk or stem of a shrub or tree, it is known as girdling. A plant that is completely girdled will die. If the bark is just partially eaten away, the tree or shrub will be in a much weakened condition. This will cause your plants to be more susceptible to attacks by disease and wood-boring insects.

Time is running out. If the precipitation continues to fall as it has in the past few months, Chicagoland is in for a snowy winter. Trees and shrubs can be protected against rodents and/or rabbits by wrapping the lower trunk of the tree with 1/4" to 3/8" hardware wire. This should be at least 18" high and buried at least 1" under the ground. Wrapping the tree with special tree wrap is also very effective.

If your plants happen to be in areas of your property where the snow tends to drift to a depth of 18" or greater, then you will need to extend your wire or wrapper to prevent rabbits from reaching up and feeding on the bark above your protective barrier.

Mice prefer to rest and feed under a vegetative cover. Keep the vegetation around your trees trimmed to a radius of at least three feet or more.

If you feel sorry for your rabbits this winter — keep them well fed by making certain they have fresh lettuce and carrots available. This way you can enjoy your ornamentals and the wildlife on your property next summer and the year round.

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