

IN YOUR GARDEN

The fact that last winter was tough on trees and shrubs is an understatement.

James A. Fizzell, University of Illinois horticulturist in Cook Co. says, "We are still seeing the effects of the winter as plants expire from delayed reaction to the damage." Plants girdled by rodents or with roots injured by excess water or low temperatures can live quite a while before the stored foods are used up.

You can avoid many of the winter problems by preparing now.

Mow all grass and weeds around the trunks of the trees and shrubs. Use hand clippers on vegetation you cannot cut with a lawn mower. Be sure not to nick the bark. Unmowed vegetation provides cover for field mice which eat the inner bark of trunks and roots, frequently killing fruit trees.

Rabbits eat the bark off the trunk and any branches within reach, particularly on young fruit trees. However, Fizzell notes, they do not bother older trees which have developed heavy outer bark. Either chemical repellants or mechanical barriers are recommended for protection from rabbits. Spray the repellant on trunk and lower branches as recommended on the label. Chemicals are more effective in protecting shrubs than mechanical barriers. Use chicken wire or hardware cloth to form a cylinder around the trunk. The cylinder should be at least 2 inches from the trunk and high enough to provide protection in the event of heavy snow cover. Or, wrap the trunk with newspapers, waterproof paper, or tree wrap.

Wrapping the trunk will also help protect trees from winter sun scald, says Fizzell, and will benefit even older trees not subject to rabbit damage.

Trunk wrapping does not keep the trunk warmer, but provides shade from the winter sun which could elevate the temperatures of the inner bark to the point where it begins growing even in mid-winter. When the sun sets, temperatures rapidly drop to freezing or lower; this causes ice crystals to form in the inner bark, killing it. Such injury usually occurs on the south or southwest side of the trunk, the area most likely to be warmed by winter sunlight, and may not become apparent until the next summer. Some nurseries are investigating white paint on the trunk as a protection from winter sun damage.

Remove the wrap when growth starts in the spring as these wrappings provide cover for insects which may injure the trunk during the growing season.

Of major concern in winter survival is drainage, says Fizzell. Fill low areas so water will not stand around the stems and roots during the winter months. Such conditions are ideal for development of disease organisms which could attack the plants at the soil line and kill them. Roots in standing water can suffocate and rot away.

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18 WAYS OF MIS-USING EQUIPMENT

Remember this is what takes place when you mis-use equipment.

1. Run equipment at excessive speeds.
Result - poor cutting appearance.
2. Run equipment with loose bolts and nuts.
Result - (a) bolts will become elongated due to vibration.
(b) bolts and nuts when lost usually end up between the reel and the bed knife.

3. Run equipment improperly adjusted, such as: (a) belts and chains, (b) clutches, (c) reel and bed knife.

Result - (a) Wear out prematurely and cause undue wear to pulleys, sprockets and bearings (b) wear clutch plates and linings, (c) will not cut properly and will wear bed knife and reel prematurely.

4. Operate with accumulation of grass clippings and dirt in air cooling fins on engine.

Result - will cut out flow of air causing engines to run excessively warm. May cause fires.

5. Operate equipment not properly lubricated.

Result - bearings, shafts, sprockets and all wearable parts will not stand up. This will cause poor performance of any equipment.

6. Operate engine with little or no oil in crankcase.

Result - connecting rod will seize in cylinder.

7. Operate engine with air - cleaner empty.

Result - will affect carburetion giving poor engine performance and shorten life of engine due to dirt entering engine.

8. Using improper equipment for the job. Example - using a light duty piece of equipment where a heavy duty should be used.

Result - poor finished job and equipment will not stand the gaff. Example would be - sending a boy to do a man's job.

9. Using improper fuel in engines such as white gas, etc.

Result - manufacturer's recommend standard gasoline, and substitutes will cause poor engine performance, also wear engine prematurely.

10. Operating equipment with faulty parts.

Result - one worn or missing part will possibly wear five others causing expensive maintenance costs.

11. Using heavy detergent oil in engines or number 10 weight oil.

Result - manufacturer's recommend non-detergent oils and number 10 is **too light** due to the high r.p.m. under which engines operate.

12. Operate any rotary mowing equipment with cutter bar out of balance.

Result - will cause undue vibration and wear bushings, bearings and could crack housings.

13. Use reel type mowers where there is any stones, or debris.

Result - tear up reels giving poor cutting appearance.

14. Over-grease or use wrong lubricant.

Result - excessive grease or wrong lubricant will fall on turf harming grass. Dirt will hang to unit.

15. Use air pressure grease guns when lubricating.

Result - pressure build up will cause fittings to pop out.

16. Drain engine oil when cold.

Result - Sediment in oil is not in suspension and will settle to the bottom of the sump. If drained when warm, 90% of the sediment will flow out.

17. Spray water on cylinder head and cylinder when cleaning equipment that is hot.

Result - will cause warpage and may crack head or block.

18. Mis-use of equipment such as:

(a) hitting obstructions, (b) jumping curbs, (c) transporting walking greensmowers on roller.

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