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**Winter Temperature Variations Leave
Plants Susceptible to Cankers**

Schoeneweiss D.F.

J. of Arboriculture Vol. 15, No. 19, 1989

Popular belief says the culprit behind severe winter injury to woody landscape plants is prolonged cold weather. However, most winter stress and injury is due to sudden temperature changes (often associated with passing cold fronts) rather than deep cold spells. Much, if not most, winter injury follows rapid radical temperature drops to below-freezing levels following extended mild fall weather. This is why extensive "winter" damage can appear following a warmer-than-average winter. To complicate diagnosis, however, such injury does not usually become apparent until after buds break the following spring — when the previous fall's freeze has been forgotten. In many cases, the sensitivity of a plant part to low temperatures limits the plant's geographic or economic use. For example, temperatures drop low enough in many northern regions to kill a peach or plum's flower buds without affecting the rest of the tree. In general, however, very low temperatures are much less important to a landscape plant's survival than a rapid and severe variation in temperature.

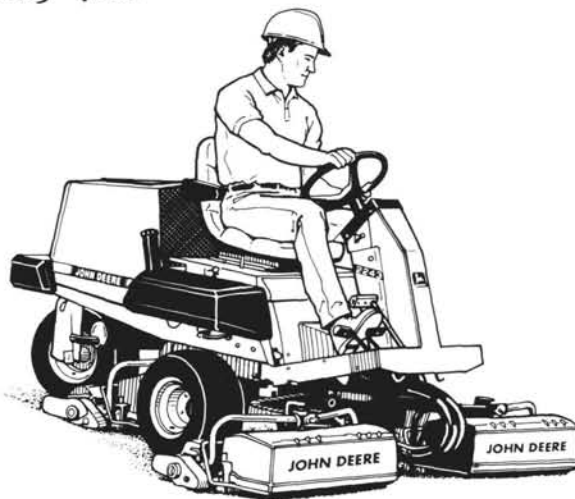
Nursery Notes, Oct. 1989

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