

# Keep Ground Moist In Fall To Save Shrubs In Winter

Low temperatures, lack of water, wind and too intense light during the winter can cause permanent damage to your garden plants and shrubs. A few easy steps gardeners can take now will help see plants through safely to spring.

Trees and shrubs are less likely to suffer winter damage if the soil in which they grow is kept moist throughout the autumn.

If this is done, their tissues go into the winter well supplied with moisture and better able

to withstand the dehydrating effects of sun and wind when the ground is cold and hard.

A LAYER OF LOOSE material spread over the surface of the ground around plants provides good insulation against both the cold and surface evaporation of soil moisture. Dry leaves make a sufficient mulch for newly-planted shrubs.

Larger plants benefit from a three-to-six-inch layer of half-rotted compost, loose, straw manure and half-rotted

leaves. Such a mulch provides even temperature for the soil as well as nourishment during the spring decay.

Shrubs, evergreens, perennials, bulbs and young or newly transplanted specimens that are adverse to low temperatures and soil heaving should be protected above ground with a good winter covering. Branches from pines, used Christmas trees or other evergreens are very satisfactory. Straw and salt-marsh hay are excellent for bulbs.

Rosebushes can be protected by heaping soil around the base of the plant. It is well to remember, too, that some larger shrubs, such as boxwood and evergreen, welcome a more sophisticated winter cover, such as burlap shelter, during excessively cold, windy days. This helps protect against the crushing weight of ice and wet snow.

WINTER COVERING should not be positioned until the ground has frozen to a depth of one to two inches. Earlier placement of such coverings invites rodents to take up winter quarters under their protection and cause irreparable damage to plants.

Likewise, too early a removal in spring may result in severe damage to tender shoots, by sun, wind and late frost.

Ice and water lying around the bases of plants also cause much loss. Adequate soil drainage is the best preventative. Melting ice in poorly drained ground is responsible for poor growth and rotting of roots and other underground plant parts.

Before bedding down your garden for winter, make sure it is carefully graded for proper surface drainage. A little attention now to these basic steps will help insure a healthier garden next spring.

## Plants Can Grow To Pattern

Train a plant to grow in an interesting pattern on an outside wall of your home and watch the passersby slow down to admire it. And, best of all, this kind of home-landscaping project is great fun.

When you prune and train a plant to grow into a flat form against walls, fences, trellises or wire frames, the plant is called an espalier (es-PAL-yair). The decorative effects are striking and almost limitless.

Espaliering is not difficult but it does require frequent pruning and tying of the branches. The best plants to espalier are those that will tolerate severe pruning and produce plenty of side branches.

VINES in this category include English ivy, winter-creeper and bittersweet. Good shrubs to train include Forsythia, camellia, flowering quince, escallonia, fuchsia, lantana, pyracantha and yew. Trees often espaliered include dwarf fruit trees, and magnolias.

For location, choose walls or fences in partial shade rather than those in full sun. Areas facing east are good.

To give your espalier room to breathe, build a trellis of

## Craftsmen Can Write For Plans

Fall and Winter plans are available free to the home craftsman interested in improving his home through his skills. They include:

Vall Desk, AE-208, for the young student.

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## Cheaper By Dozen

Forty-five per cent of the one-family homes built in 1966 sold for less than \$20,000.

wood or wire about six inches away from the wall and of the size and shape you want the final plan to be. Be sure the framework is strong enough to support the final plan.

Start with young plants (one or two years old) with side branches already shooting out from where you want them. Plant them in the normal way, but go easy on the feeding. A fast-growing espalier is harder to control and train.

If YOU CAN'T find a young plant with side branches where you want them, just cut the main trunk down to the point where you want the branches to develop and they will.

Bend the branches gently and fasten to the framework with cloth or yarn. Don't use wire. Cut away all branches that don't fit the pattern you want. From there on, just train or prune the new branches as they develop.

When your espalier is fully grown, you can bet it will be the talk of the neighborhood as well as a source of continuing pleasure to you.

# The Green Thumb

By GEORGE ABRAHAM

MILDEW ON LILACS: When nights are cool and damp, lilac and phlox leaves turn almost white with powdery mildew. Is this a serious problem? No. Just about lilacs and phlox get the mildew, or white powdery coating over the leaves, due to a fungus which grows over the outside. The mildew is unsightly but has no permanent effect on the growth of the plants.

If you want to check it, use a mildew killer such as sulfur dust, or Karathane (Mildex), applied earlier in the season. Meanwhile, don't worry too much about its harmful effects on your plants.

Borers are a worst pest of lilacs. Look for holes in trunks, with sawdust coming out. Fill holes with a borer paste and seal off with putty or bubble gum to trap the gas inside. Badly infested trunks can be burned after you cut them off close to the ground.

Next spring, keep the trunks sprayed or dusted with dieldrin or chlordane.

HIBISCUS IS HARDY: Not enough home gardeners grow the shrubby hibiscus plant. Some plants grow five feet tall, and produce blossoms up to five inches across. They start blooming in mid-summer and last until frost.

Flowers are produced on stems of current year's growth. That means you can cut the old stems back in fall or in early spring, to encourage new growth to come on. It's important to cut the cane-back since they will winterkill anyway.

About the only care they need is water in dry weather. If the soil gets too dry buds may not form.

GREEN TOMATOES ARE GOOD: If you happen to have a lot of green tomatoes, try making some unusual items such as catsup, pie or relish.

Here's a good recipe for making green tomato pie. Take medium sized tomatoes, pare and cut out the seeds. Have your pie tin lined with paste of biscuit dough. Slice tomatoes very thin, filling pan somewhat heaping. Then grate over it a nutmeg, put in a half cup of butter and a medium cup sugar. Pour in half cup of vinegar before adding top crusts. Bake 1 1/2 hour in a moderate oven, serve hot.

Or try canning green tomatoes for winter frying. Slice green tomatoes, pack into quart jar, put in a teaspoon salt, fill with cold water, put on lid and boil for three minutes in canner (time when water bath begins to boil).

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: A reader writes: "Is it possible to start geraniums from seed?" Answer: Yes, there's an early strain, "Carefree," which if sown in February will be ready to flower by the Fourth of July.

## Try Indoor Garden

For bright bursts of flowering color throughout the cold winter months, more and more green thumb enthusiasts are turning to indoor winter window gardens full of hardy, spring flowering bulbs.

You can enjoy a constant succession of brilliance and fragrance from forced daffodils, tulips and hyacinths from mid-December to mid-March. Even the apartment dweller who lacks proper facilities can succeed in forcing beautiful paper-white narcissus and lilacs-of-the-valley.

As for good garden soil that contains a reasonable amount of humus and sand is satisfactory for forcing dormant bulbs.

Starting in early fall, and at two-week intervals, position the bulbs with their necks protruding slightly above the planting medium. Moistening the soil occasionally after potting and place pots in a cool, dark location.

CONSTANT MOISTURE during root formation and after growth begins is vitally important. Six to 10 weeks is normally required for bulbs to form a good root system.

The time required from the beginning of forcing to blooms varies according to temperatures, amount of light, varieties and time of year.

Leave pots until you can see well developed buds to go out of the ground on hyacinths; shoots four to six inches high on tulips, with a bulge or ring visible around base system; foliage on daffodils about five-inches tall. At this point, they should be brought into a warm, sunny atmosphere.

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