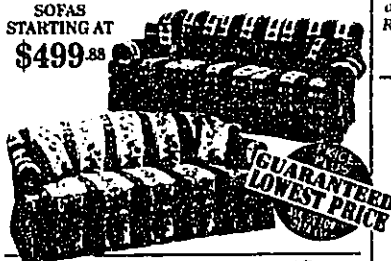


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GARDEN SPOT

Do shrubs really need ugly burlap wrappings?



MARTY FOGLEY

I recently received a call from a reader and she posed a question that I have mulled over in my mind for quite some time. She feels, and I agree, that the burlap wrappings so many people put around shrubs during our cold months are unsightly. Just why are they necessary,

what do they do to really protect the plants — or is there an alternative?

Not only do homeowners use the wrappings, but I have seen a whole group of trees at a business complex, obviously the work of professionals, wrapped with this unsightly burlap. It certainly doesn't add to the appearance of the landscape. These wrappings usually are put on the plants around November and generally aren't removed until late March or sometimes early April. So for at least a third or more of the year the "brown stuff" prevails.

I spoke with landscape designer Jim Slezinski, vice president, Goldner-Walsh Nursery Inc., Pontiac, and he agreed with the reader and me, and probably a lot of you readers as well. Ugh!

The first consideration when planting broadleaf evergreens, such as rhododendron, azalea, holly, pines, spruces and firs is to site them properly in a north, east or northeast side of the property where they will receive the least wind damage. Coniferous trees (evergreens that produce cones) can be planted as a windbreak to protect broad-leaved evergreens from wind damage, because as a rule they suffer less severely. Well-drained soil for trees is a must — good aeration and water drainage will do much to ensure their survival.

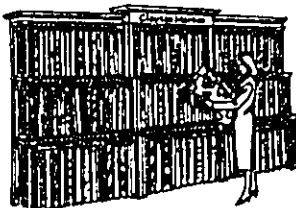
Slezinski also highly recommends watering evergreens, especially new plantings, just before the ground freezes, which is generally just after Thanksgiving.

See FOGLEY, 8D

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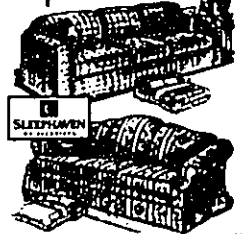
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