

ShrubAnd Tree Care Pays Off

Spending some time, thought and effort in caring for shrubs and trees will protect your original landscaping investment. Damage to plants may come from weather, plants themselves, pests and over-fertilizing, according to Dr. Harold Davidson, Michigan State University professor of horticulture.

One common problem is

applying too much fertilizer, or uneven distribution of fertilizer. This can cause a dry, burned look in shrubs. Davidson says that most trees and shrubs don't need much fertilizer. Their widespread roots will get some benefit from lawn fertilizers.

However, a nitrogen deficiency might show up in some trees as a yellow or bronze color at the edges of

leaves. Low potassium makes trees drop their leaves early, from the bottom up. Low potassium spruce will drop older needles.

High salt content in pet animal wastes can cause problems for plants. There are plant sprays which repel animals, however, these wash off in the rain. Davidson suggests putting barberry cuttings around the base of

plants. Animals don't like to step on the barberry. But people don't like stepping on it either, Davidson admitted. Salt from winter highway safety measures can turn white and red pines brown where salty spray or slush covers them. However, Austrian pine and spruce seem more able to withstand this treatment. The best solution is in the choice of

plants, if you have this problem. Salt will not kill a tree unless contact is prolonged for many years. However, salt may kill individual branches.

TREES sometimes kill themselves by girdling their trunks with their own roots. Davidson recommends cutting away roots that seem to be growing too tightly around the base of a tree.

HEAVY SNOWS and hard winters can have a disastrous effect on plants. If shrubs, such as boxwood, have too heavy a snow load, you may need to shore them up with protective stakes or fences. In late winter, warm sun and frozen ground may dehydrate the plant. The sun evaporates moisture from the plant faster than its roots can get water from the frozen ground.

New Lawn Grass Now Available

A new lawn grass, developed at Michigan State University, should be widely available throughout the state this fall.

The new variety, Wintergreen, is a superior red fescue grass that is tailored to Michigan growing conditions, according to Drs. James Beard and Fred Elliott, the MSU crop scientists who developed it.

Beard and Elliott say that Wintergreen compares favorably to Pennlawn red fescue, and produces a very thick turf for lawns, parks, cemeteries, roadsides and industrial grounds.

Also, Wintergreen is much darker green, has superior uniformity, stays greener during the winter, and can be grown under shady conditions. Best of all, it produces good turf with a minimum of fertilizing and watering.

According to the scientists, the adaptation of Wintergreen to areas outside Michigan is not known. Wintergreen is designed specifically for use under the moderate climate and light soil conditions of the Wolverine State.

The best bet for home owners who want to get Wintergreen seed are commercial seed dealers who specialize in the production and sale of turfgrass seed.

Time To Fertilize Rhubarb

If you had a good crop of rhubarb this year, it's time to fertilize it to insure another good crop next year, according to Michigan State University horticulturists.

The best way to fertilize is a process called "sidedressing." Apply the fertilizer along the row one-half foot from the rhubarb crowns. Weeds can be kept down by mulching or cultivating.

Use 1 1/2 pounds of a high nitrogen fertilizer for every 100 feet of row. A good fertilizer ratio is either 35-0-0 or 10-10-10. If the 10-10-10 is used the amount should be increased to 3 to 4 pounds per 100 feet.

After 10 to 12 years in the same spot, rhubarb roots should be divided. Dividing will help prevent thin stalks. However, dividing and transplanting should be done only in the spring.

Fertilizing now will give the rhubarb a helping hand for storing food in its roots for next winter. Fertilizing increases the chance of a good crop of rhubarb next summer.

No One Knows

Plants provide both physical and mental benefits for man, according to Dr. John Carew, Michigan State University horticulturist. Plants can provide protection from noise, sun, winds and noisy neighbors. They also affect man's attitude. But no one knows man's minimum daily requirement for plants.

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