



Winter Garden Tips – 1/2014

As we endure this unusually snowy and brutally cold winter, at least in comparison to recent years, here are a few tips to help your garden weather the elements:

- Most of our plants will endure the frigid temperatures we're experiencing because the ground is well insulated with a deep layer of snow. I, for one, am grateful for the snow...it's beautiful, and a garden's best friend right now.
- Do pay attention to the weight load of the snow on the branches of your evergreens. Once temperatures rise above freezing you should gently brush any remaining snow from the lower branches of your evergreens first, working your way up to the top of the plant.
- For the remainder of the winter, pay attention to the snow load and brush the limbs off before they are permanently affected or broken. Wet, heavy snow can do a lot of damage. Thankfully, so far this winter, most of the snow here in the Chicago area has been light and 'dry'.
- Protect multi-stemmed evergreens, such as arborvitae, junipers and yews from winter damage by tying trunks together with old nylons or cotton twine. Again, wait until temperatures rise above freezing before attempting.
- Limit, or eliminate all together, the use of any salt-based products. I frequently see severe damage in the spring to plants along sidewalks and driveways that were over-salted during the winter months. Switch to pet and plant safe products, or sand, if possible.

Be prepared for a soggy Spring. All this snow will melt eventually and may possibly overwhelm our gardens with moisture during the cool months of Spring. Some plants will survive the wet conditions, others will not. Only time will tell.

Until Spring, may you enjoy the peace and beauty of your garden this winter.

