

(revision date:4/30/2013)

Common Cultural: Winter desiccation

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful plant problem management.

Biology

Plants may become desiccated (dehydrated) on sunny, cold winter days when the ground and roots are frozen. The plant is unable to take up sufficient moisture from the frozen soil to replace water lost through the leaves and stems. Damage usually occurs on the south and southwest side of the plant which receives the most direct sunlight.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Select plants hardy for the local climate and soil conditions, especially native plants.
- ~ Do not fertilize, prune, or water heavily late in the season. This can encourage late-season growth that may not acclimate well in the fall.
- ~ Apply loose organic mulch over the root zone to maintain soil moisture and give protection from cold temperatures.
- ~ Place evergreens in areas that minimize their exposure to sun and wind. If this is not possible, provide shading or a windbreak during the winter months.
- ~ Wrap trunks of recently transplanted trees with a white or light-color bark-wrap in the fall, especially younger trees or ones with dark bark.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides

None recommended

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Images



~ Caption: Cedar damaged by desiccating wind
~ Photo by: R.S. Byther



~ Caption: Winter scorch on fir
~ Photo by: G.A. Chastagner



~ Caption: Winter desiccation on spruce
~ Photo by: R.S. Byther



~ *Caption: Winter desiccation on rhododendron*
~ *Photo by: R. Maleike*