



### **My Evergreens are not so GREEN anymore?**

The ultimate reason winter burning occurs on evergreens is a basic bad combination of freezing temperatures and the plant's inability or lack of availability to uptake water.

This results in desiccation or die back on needles and scales on evergreens and in some cases total winter die off.

There are, however, several factors or environmental factors that can cause winter burning.

- Cold winds
- A sudden drop in temperature that causes tender needles to stress.
- Inadequate amounts of water applied during fall after irrigation has been blown out.
- Sunny days combined with freezing temperatures or inadequate water available.
- A lack of protection from (not enough snow coverage nor a blanket).

Understanding which of these factors or combination of factors causing ailments to your evergreens can be difficult to decipher.

It is always important to use multiple preventative procedures as well as multiple applications of watering.

### **Preventative Procedures:**

- Water deeply in the fall especially after irrigation has been blown out and we are not receiving much rain in the fall. Keep in mind most plants need about 1" of water a week to sustain themselves.

- Use *Wilt-Stop* or *Wilt-Pruf*: This product is a wax material provided in a concentrate form or in a premixed form. It acts as a thick layer of "lotion" that protects needles and scales from drying out. This product also reduces the affects of damaging cold winds to the plant. (If you decide to use the concentrate form a pump sprayer will be necessary— however, NEVER use a sprayer that has ever carried/contained a herbicide or weed killer).

- Blankets and Burlap: If you are already aware that a plant is susceptible to damaging winds or even to contortion from the weight of ice and snow, wrapping plants in burlap and blankets for extra protection is helpful for support and to act as a coat.

### **Immediate Procedures:**

- Water deeply in the winter 1-2 times a month on warm days. Especially for new plantings or easily stressed plants. This means dragging the hose out or using several buckets of water. The larger the plant the larger the area you need to water.

- If plants are not expressing an excessive amount of winter burn and still have a lot of green, you may still have an opportunity to use *Wilt-Stop* or *Wilt-Pruf* on a warm day about 55 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

### **The Waiting Game:**

Unfortunately, once needles and scales on an evergreen are deeply brown/red it is not going to return to green. However, some plants do express other and similar winter colors and may exhibit a chameleon color change based on the change in season and temperature; most specifically plants in the Juniper family and Arborvitae family have this response.

It is not a clear image if plants are experiencing entire winter die back or heavy loss of branches this early in the season, so we recommend simply WAITING and see what pushes in the spring. Remove any branches that do not respond with new growth whatsoever in the spring. You will be surprised that a lightly to mildly winter burned plant will eventually be covered with new healthy green growth after a few year and a little love. Plants with more damage can often be salvaged and retrained back to a nice shape with proper pruning and fertilizing.