



WINTERBURN ON EVERGREENS

Winterburn is a combination of sunburn and windburn and is a fairly common winter injury among evergreens.

Winterburn occurs when cold winter wind blows over evergreen needles, and bright winter sun shines on the needles drawing away moisture from the tree, which it can't replace due to the frozen ground.

Winterburn can be identified by the golden or brown needles on your trees. The damage will always be above the snow line and more severe on the South and West exposures. Sometimes entire branches can be dead. Severe Winterburn can completely kill an evergreen leaving you with a brown and crispy tree.

Winterburn affects evergreens such as Junipers, Yews, Pine, Spruce and Cedar.

Winterburn does not occur on the coldest days of winter, it occurs in the spring when the sun starts to get hotter and more intense and the ground is still frozen. On years when it is a late spring Winterburn seems to be the most severe. With snow still on the ground in April and the sun high in the sky, the reflection off the snow causes sunburn.



Preventing Winterburn

Avoid planting evergreens too close to the south or west side of a light colored house. Trees that are planted along the west or south side of the house get burnt both from the front and the back as the sun reflects off the house.

Keep the soil moist throughout the fall; provide a good watering just before freeze up. Mulching helps to keep moisture in and prevents competition from weeds and lawn.

Build protective screens. Burlap shields, especially on the south and west exposures can help prevent Winterburn. The Burlap should not touch the trees.

Treating Winterburn

Fertilize Evergreens with the proper application of food (Evergreen Fertilizer 30-10-10) and water it in well into the spring.

Wait until new growth has begun and then remove those stems that were killed.

***The best idea is to wait for a bit and see if the damage is permanent before embarking on any winter burn treatment methods. If winter burn in evergreens is persistent in your area, consider erecting a windbreak of some kind.**