

Identifying Stress in Landscape Plants

If you are able, bring a photo and/or sample(s) of the stressed plant to our nursery horticulture staff. We will help to identify the issue and provide recommendations on how to remedy the problem.

Transplant Shock: What's Normal, What 's Not

LEAF/NEEDLE DROP. If you are watering correctly, there will be some yellowing of the foliage. Depending on the plant variety and time of transplant, some leaves/needles will drop. Continue watering even if the plant loses some or all of its foliage, for the first season. Root development continues even after leaves or needles have dropped.

GROWTH OVER FIRST FEW YEARS.

- Perennials: Sleep / Creep / Leap! There may be three years before substantial spreading or growth on transplanted perennials. This is very typical. It takes the root system years to establish and acclimate to the soil.
- Shrubs/Most Evergreens: It may take 2-3 years to see substantial growth on transplanted shrubs or evergreens, depending on the variety.
- Trees: Transplant shock will be observed in all trees and B&B evergreens. Hard transplant shock will be seen on honeylocust, oaks, birch (depending on season). Most other species take longer to establish in their new soil. In the first two years there may be little visible growth, foliage may be small or appear distorted, and foliage may not be as full as prior to transplanting. The root system is trying to grow out from the root ball and into your new soil. It can take up to 3-5 years for substantial growth to show after transplanting trees.

Overwatering

It is possible to water a plant too much! Symptoms of overwatering consist of droopy yellow leaves or fungus at the base of the plant. If you are unsure how much water to apply to a plant, please ask a nursery staff member. Every plant is different and requires its own personal attention. Drought tolerant plant will not require as much water as others.

Under Watering

It can be easy to forget to water your plants, especially in the busy summer days. Symptoms of under watering are droopy yellow leaves and dried or brown ("crunchy") foliage. If you have mulch around the base of your plant, pull the mulch away leaving 2" of soil clear. Check the soil for moisture. You may need to use a shovel to check 6" into the ground to see how wet the soil is. Be careful not to disturb root system of the plant. The soil should be wet within 6" of the top of the ground. If you are using a water or soil moisture meter, remove and recalibrate regularly.

Insect or Animal Damage

Insect or animal damage can, unfortunately, be a common problem in gardens. Some symptoms to look for are holes in leaves, spots on leaves, webbing or holes in bark.

Chemical or Herbicide Damage

Chemical damage will often show up on only one side of the plant (not evenly distributed), or only on new growth. This type of damage generally shows up suddenly rather than developing over time. Please refer to the UW-Extension for more information on how to address these issues.