



## **Insect and Disease Control**

Observation is one of your best defenses. It is important that plant material be inspected periodically and any insect or disease problem should be treated immediately to prevent further damage. Things to look for are: cocoons, scales, webs, holes bored into trunk, leaves or twigs that suddenly wilt at branch tips and turn black, defoliation; foliage that is disfigured, eaten, mottled, covered with powdery white patches, orange or black spots. Contact the maintenance division or bring in a sample and explain the problem. Noted below are a few common problems that do not involve insects or disease:

**Transplant Shock** will happen soon after installation; it may appear as wilted leaves, leaf drop, wilted branches and/or premature fall color. While the plant may be fine, it will be necessary to monitor it a bit closer.

**Needle Drop** is common with evergreen trees and shrubs in the fall. It will usually occur on the interior of the plant. This natural process will occur every year and should warrant little concern.

**Winter Burn** is commonly found on evergreens and broadleaf evergreens and will appear as burned or dried foliage in the spring. Often, new spring growth will cover the damaged area or some minor cosmetic pruning will improve its appearance. To keep evergreens from drying out during winter, an anti-desiccant (Wilt-pruf) should be applied as directed in early and mid winter. If soil is dry in late November, water plants to carry them through the winter.

Keep plants growing vigorously, they are less likely be attacked by pests and diseases. A thorough fall clean up will alleviate many of the over-wintering insect and disease organisms. Fall clean-up is especially beneficial for perennials; cut back the foliage and remove leaves/debris from the bed. Those perennials with winter interest should be cut back in the spring.

If using any pesticide, fully read instructions and apply as directed at correct rate. Some pesticides are restricted from use on specific plants and may cause damage. Excessive use of pesticides is environmentally damaging, killing beneficial insects such as ladybugs, lacewings, praying mantis, earthworms and bees.

Do not spray pesticides in windy conditions or if temperatures exceed 85°. Remember, there may often be safer organic solutions to insect and disease problems, like Dormant Oil or Insecticidal Soap.