

## Protect Them Now!

It's time to protect plants before winter. Strawberries need to be mulched to protect the crowns and roots from heaving caused by the freezing and thawing of the soil. Mulching prevents winter damage. Straw makes a good mulch material because it provides good insulation without becoming matted. The straw should stay on the plants until April when new growth begins. If the mulch is removed too early freezing will damage the plants. If it is removed too late berry yield is reduced and maturity is delayed. The straw removed from the row makes a nice mulch to keep down weeds between the rows. It's also time to mulch many of your more tender ornamentals such as roses and chrysanthemums.

Evergreens that are young or exposed to winter wind will benefit from the protection of a windbreak. Small evergreen specimens can be protected by using burlap, canvas, a tight lath screening, or other similar material supported by wooden or metal stakes. For more information contact your local cooperative extension office. In Lackawanna County call 963-6842 and ask for the Garden Helpline or email [LackawannaMG@psu.edu](mailto:LackawannaMG@psu.edu)

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