

WINTER PLANT PROTECTION AT FAIRVIEW NURSERY

PHIL BEAUMONT

*Fairview Nursery
Wilson, North Carolina*

At Fairview Nursery we grow azaleas, hollies, photinias and some junipers in containers. We grow only one, two, and three gallon material. We are a bread-and-butter nursery and do not grow anything out of the ordinary. All our plants are grown in a bark and German peat mix. Our bark is green and runs from 1/4 inch to 50-cent piece size. All 2 and 3 gallon plants are fertilized with 16-4-8 formulation. At the time they are containerized, one gallon material and azaleas are fertilized with 18-6-12 Osmocote at the rate of 1 teaspoon per gallon. All plants are fertilized with 10-20-10 through the irrigation system several times during the summer. They are grown in full sun on black plastic.

Previous years, during the latter part of November and early December, all 2 and 3-gallon containers were pushed can tight, except for the azaleas. We jammed at this time for several reasons. One is that we ship on into mid-November and we find it difficult to pick out orders from can-tight stock. Another reason is that the cooler air flowing around the cans really slows down the growth and hardens it off before jamming. It may also be that our bark:peat mix is staying warmer than a mix containing sand.

All one gallon plants, except azaleas, are placed can-tight when they go to the field, and any of these left spaced after shipping are pushed together in the same manner as the 3-gallon material. No sawdust or bark is placed around these beds.

Azaleas are handled somewhat differently. All 1-gallon material is spaced on 10 to 12-inch centers as it goes into the container area after potting in the spring. The cans are left on this spacing until sold. We are not growing forcing grade azaleas.

The 3-gallon material has been handled differently until this year. In the past, it was placed can-tight, as it was potted in the winter and spring. This year, all 2 and 3-gallon material is placed on 18 to 20-inch centers as it goes into the field. This early spacing is being done due to our lack of labor during the shipping season in the spring when these cans need to be spaced. All 3-gallon material left from the fall season is reorganized to make room for new canning. We try not to get these cans spaced any closer than they were spaced before.

We do not use water as a method of winter protection. We water before each cold snap, but do not coat the plants with ice.

At Fairview we grow most of the hardier cultivars of azaleas since our market is north of our location. We do grow some Indica cultivars but gamble on the winter we may have.

This open method has worked for us. We feel that we get more hardening off and tougher plants by allowing cool air around the containers. We do suffer some losses, but do not feel that they justify the added expense of winter protection.

WINTER PLANT PROTECTION AT GREENLEAF NURSERY COMPANY, OKLAHOMA DIVISION

STANLEY FÖSTER

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Over the past 15 years Greenleaf Nursery has spent a great deal of money on its overwintering process. The winter of 1961 taught us some rather severe lessons that resulted in such extensive steps being taken. In the winter of 1976-77, all of the extra effort paid off.

In January of 1977, we had a low temperature of near -20°F , and the temperature did not get above 10°F for three days. Had we not had the system of overwintering that we have used for the last several years, our losses would have been devastating. As it was, our losses were basically limited to 5-gallon pyracantha that were outside and 5-gallon sweetgum. All items that were in our overwintering houses were spared, including azaleas that we had brought in from Alabama and hollies from our nursery in Texas. Thus, we feel like our system had the ultimate test and came through in relatively good condition.

Our overwintering system is divided into four basic procedures:

- (1) Bunching for mutual protection.
- (2) Mulching with wheat straw.
- (3) Constructing overwintering houses.
- (4) Protecting from dessication by watering before and after sub-freezing weather.

We bunch basically all our plant material for winter, since our operation is totally containerized. Deciduous trees and broadleaf evergreens are bunched for mutual protection. We place containers "can-tight", where the type of plant material will allow but, out of necessity, must leave limited space between containers on some cultivars due to the possibility of foliage discoloration and disease. Conifer cultivars are also