Protect trees and shrubs from rabbits this winter

K-State horticulture expert offers tips to prevent rabbits from nibbling on newly planted trees and shrubs

By Maddy Rohr, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — As winter approaches and vegetation is more scarce, it becomes even more important to provide protection to newly planted trees and shrubs from rabbits and other pests, says Kansas State University horticulture expert Ward Upham.

He said rabbits, in particular, love to nibble at the base of small trees and shrubs.

“Protect your investment with at least 2-foot-tall cylinders of 1-inch-mesh, chicken wire or similar barrier,” Upham said.

The barrier can be removed in the spring or left for an extended period of time, but Upham warns to remove the barrier before it constricts the tree’s trunk.

Other forms of protection include plastic tree wraps and liquid rabbit-repellent sprays. A repellent spay requires another application after it rains, Upham said.

Upham and his colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly Horticulture Newsletter with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens. The newsletter is available to view online or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can also send their garden and yard-related questions to Upham at wupham@ksu.edu, or contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

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