

Ailing Plants

What are the symptoms/problems?

Usually the caller starts off with a description of the problem and identifies the affected plant.

Take notes about pertinent information. Sometimes the description is vague such as, "My daisies are dying and I don't know why." To gather more information it will be necessary to ask more questions. Here are some suggestions:

How long have you noticed these symptoms?

Did they occur slowly or rapidly?

What is the age of the plant?

When was it planted?

Are there other plants with or without the symptoms?

Light conditions: Does it get sun, part-sun, or shade? Maybe it gets both, so try to determine how many hours of sun vs. shade and what time of day it gets sun or shade. For example, morning sun, noon sun, afternoon sun, afternoon shade, etc.

Mulch: What type and how deep? Mulch should be pulled at least 1 inch from base/trunk and should be no more than 2-3 inches deep. An exception is for winter protection and only if you know the plant is cold sensitive.

What are your watering practices? Amount of water depends on the type of plant. Some are drought tolerant; others prefer moderate or moist soil. In any case you should water deeply to encourage strong, deep root systems, being sure not to overwater. You also may advise them to do a percolation test to see how quickly the soil drains. Also recommend the finger-poke test. Suggest they purchase a rain gauge or tell them how to make one from a tin can.

Have you applied any fertilizer(s), herbicides, or insecticides on or near troubled plant, or to where run-off from another area might flow? If yes to any of these, ask what type/brand used and whether spot-treatment or broadcast. Take into consideration whether or not the uses of the product(s) were actually warranted or whether they were properly applied. Remember, we recommend spot-