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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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PROTECTING PLANTS FOR THE WINTER

In dry cold climates, plants such as rosebushes, strawberries and hardy perennials benefit from some protection in winter. A deep snow blanket lying on the ground most of the season, makes an effective insulator. But as a snow cover is somewhat uncertain, a mulch of leaves or cornstalks is also desirable. It does not keep the bed warm during long periods of cold, but protects the plants from very sudden temperature changes. Alternate thawing and freezing in winter will cause bare ground to "heave", the soil is loosened and roots of small plants may be partially pushed out of the ground. A good mulch will reduce the amount of heaving. Straw wrapped around rosebushes or delicate shrubs protects them not only from extremely sudden changes of temperature, but also from the drying action of strong cold winds, which is especially marked on sunny days. Such wrappers protect small branches from damage in heavy snow or ice storms and are also of value in preventing the plants from budding out prematurely in case of unseasonable warm weather in late winter.

(Tomorrow: Dust)

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