Horizon Landscape
1525 Spencerville Road • Spencerville, Maryland 20868
www.HorizonLandscaping.com

Seasonal Plant Behavior/Characteristics:

What to Consider Before you Assume Your Plant is Dying

Spring:

Spring symbolizes life and growth in the plant world. For many plants, though, weather is a monumental factor the timing and rate of new foliage growth and flowering. An unseasonably cold spring may delay the budding of flowers, especially in younger, less mature trees and shrubs. It is crucial to maintain regular watering routine during the first year of installation (given the ground is not frozen) even when doubts may loom about a plant's state of health. Just remember, not all plants behave the same given the same exact conditions, and it is easy for an untrained eye to mistaken a dormant plant for a dead plant. By May, healthy plants will show their new growth, while dead or struggling plants and shrubs will remain bare with brittle twigs/branches.

Arborvitae** **(Rheingold)- Rheingold Arborvitae are prized for its beautiful and vibrant color, which fluctuates vastly during the year. During the spring, foliage typically appears light green with yellow hues, gradually assuming more yellow hues as spring unfolds.

Azaleas – reddish and purple tinted leaves are completely normal characteristics for many azalea varieties. A spindly appearance in early spring is quite normal for azaleas. Typically, azaleas begin to fill out as either leaves or flowers develop. Among the numerous species of azaleas, the annual bloom schedule widely varies, ranging from early spring to late summer. Early flowering varieties bloom in mid to late April; new leaves will develop after flowers fade, typically by late May. For late blooming azaleas, new foliage emerges prior to flowering.

Occasionally, a warm march followed several cold days in April will kill flower buds of Azaleas. Any Azalea with immature buds is vulnerable to damage during a bout of cold

weather. The effected varieties largely depend on the timing as bud development in early, mid and late season Azaleas varies from year to year. Though Azaleas with damaged buds will not flower during the spring, damaged flower buds rarely affect the eventual leaf development or the return of blooms the following year.

Deciduous Plants & Shrubs ***(Barberry, Butterfly Bush, Exbury azaleas, Hydrangea, Spiraea, Vibernum)*** **–** Deciduous shrubs require a series of warm days before new growth occurs. New shrubs generally take 2 weeks longer than established plants to develop fresh growth, sometimes occurring as late as mid May. In the end, the absence of cold temperatures reminds deciduous plant species to shed their bare, winter look, and the once sparse and barren branches gradually develop new leaves and foliage.

Note: The branches of Hydrangeas partially die back from the previous year. Typically, the top of branches die while the bottom portion remains alive. The transition point between live and dead is unknown until May brings forth new leaves, which pinpoint live portion of branches. At this point, any dead parts of branches may be removed.

Herbaceous Perennials ***(*****Daylilly, Dianthus, Hostas, Iris, Sedum, Scaboisa) –** After their vacation from the cold winter weather, herbaceous perennials will reemerge from the ground (typically by May). Several factors, including temperature and precipitation, affect the timing of the perennials return. If a given year was an unseasonably cold in the spring, perennials may delay sprouting from the ground.

Hollies - Around May, most hollies drop old foliage in order to create ample space for upcoming growth. The start of this process is marked by yellowing old leaves, which the tree or shrub sheds shortly after. By June, new foliage will be nearly developed, renewing the Holly's fullness.

Nandinas ***(Firepower, Compacta, Harbour Dwarf, Gulfstream)*** **–** During the spring, some Nandinas take a short break from their dramatic display of bright colors. Contrasting to the reds and oranges proudly displayed during other parts of the year, new growth tends to be a fresh vibrant shade of green.

Summer:

Arborvitae ***(Rheingold)-*** Begins the summer with vivid green foliage which transitions to golden yellow with orange hues in the later part of the summer.

Herbaceous Perennials ***(Daffodil, Hyacinth, SnowDrops, Tupil)*** **–** Stems and leaves shrivel and die to the ground.

Fall:

As the year approaches fall, many plants exhibit changes in appearance that are completely normal and healthy. Such normal behaviors are commonly mistaken as evidence of a plant's declining health.

Arborvitae, Cypress, Fir, Pine, Spruce - During the fall, many evergreens shed their interior foliage/needles in order to make room for new growth in the spring. Several elements within seasonal needle loss vary from plant to plant as well as year-to-year. Color change, length of cycle, and prominence of needle loss are all subject to variation. It is not uncommon for needle loss to be more obvious on some trees than others and may be more pronounced some years.

Arborvitae ***(Rheingold)-*** In the early fall, foliage will likely appear deep gold. Later in the season, it is normal to observe orange and rust/copper colored foliage.

Herbaceous Perennials ***(Astilbe, Coreopsis, Daisy, Daylilly, Dianthus, Hosta, Iris, Sedum, Scaboisa)*** - Brown and withering appearance. The foliage will continue to decline into the winter.

Mahonia ***(Leather Leaf) –*** As temperatures cool, leaf color may transform from green to hues of red, orange and yellow.

Nandina – Many Nandinas have spectacular fall color. It is completely normal to observe a combination of red, orange, yellow and green foliage.

Winter:

With the impending risk of frigid weather along with snow and ice, many plants take necessary steps to combat damages from harsh winter climate.

Arborvitae** **(Rheingold)- Deep copper colored foliage appears in winter months on outer foliage. Interior foliage appears orange to dark green, depending on the winter climate.

Aucuba** **(Gold Dust) – Aucuba leaves generally remain the same through out the year. However, during cold winters, dieback may occur, resulting in a varying amount of black foliage. Healthy plants will produce new leaves by late April to Mid May.

Azaleas – Though azaleas are technically an evergreen plant, during the winter most azaleas shed a significant portion of their leaves. Doing this prevents the loss of vital moisture in the winter. Prior to dropping this foliage, leaves may first turn yellow, red, deep red/purple. The variety of azalea is a main factor in winter behavior. While one species may uniformly change color, another may remain practically unaltered. Particularly cold winters as well as snow/ice may amplify the severity winter behavior in azaleas.

Deciduous Plants and Shrubs** **(Barberry, Butterfly Bush, Exbury azaleas, Hydrangea, Spiraea)- Plants lose their foliage, exposing the plants branches. In the winter, these plants become dormant, essentially a state of hibernation for plants.

Herbaceous Perennials** **(Daylilly, Dianthus, Hostas, Iris, Sedum, Scaboisa) – foliage withers, dieing to ground. The perennial's core root system remains intact below ground during the winter.

Nandina** **(Compacta, Firepower, Gulfstream, Harbour Dwarf) – Leaves display vivid colors in winter season. Leaves on certain varieties turn completely red, while others maintain a mixture color or remain predominately green.

During extreme winters, Nandinas can suffer winter dieback. Although this may be unsightly, especially in March and April, healthy plants will fully recover and replace dieback with new foliage by mid May.