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OSU EXTENSION NEWS

# Wrapping young trees for protection

**Y**oung, thin barked trees such as maples and other species often sunscald unless protected. The twigs that shade the trunk should be left at planting, but cut back a few inches so they become denser. A twiggy trunk is preferable to tree wraps, but not all trees have enough twigs, nor is it always practical or aesthetically pleasing to leave lower limbs.

Commercial tree wraps are available and may provide protection for thin-barked trees. Plastic wraps may provide better protection than paper wraps against lawn mower, weed-eater and rodent damage. If misused, however, damage may occur in the form of trunk girdling or constriction, insects, diseases and excessive bark moisture.

Protective wraps may not be necessary at planting. Use based on the type of protection needed. Normal application of tree trunk wraps is October-March for the first two growing seasons. Wraps should be removed each spring prior to spring growth. During spring growth the trunk expands and increases



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in size. Wraps too tightly applied or left on during this time may result in constriction to the trunk. Tree wraps should be applied loosely from the base up to the first branch by overlapping for a shingle effect. Plastic wraps should fit loosely and include holes or slits for good air movement. Periodically inspect the wraps for trunk damage and insects.

Seedling trees and shrubs may need a shelter during weather extremes during either the winter or summer. Cheesecloth or various other windbreaks can be used. Unfortunately, anti-desiccants do not relieve plant stress under Oklahoma conditions. For more information on tree wraps and their use contact your local OSU Extension Office.