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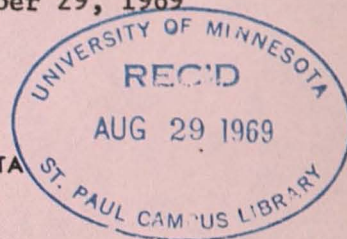
YARD 'N' GARDEN



EXTENSION
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WINTER PROTECTION OF SMALL FRUIT

Mulching strawberry plants helps protect them from low temperatures and planting losses caused by soil heaving. The strawberry planting should be mulched before severe winter weather, but not before the plants have been subjected to a few good frosts. Normally, early November is about right in the Twin Cities area.

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Small grain straws and marsh hay are the best mulching materials. Apply mulch to a depth of 3 to 4 inches. Leave the mulch on as late in the spring as possible to hold back bloom until after frost. Check frequently -- if the leaves start to turn yellow, remove the mulch at once.

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Raspberry plants often suffer from winter injury. The only practical way to protect canes from winter damage is to bend the canes down in the fall and cover them with soil. Do this in late October or early November before the ground freezes.

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When you grow tender grapes such as Concord, winter protection is necessary, particularly in the northern areas of Minnesota. In the spring, select and tie a strong cane and the branches that develop from this cane to the wire trellis. In the fall, cut back these upright branches to two or three buds. Lay the canes down and cover them with soil. Mulch with straw or hay if it's available.

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