

## **Enjoy Your Winter Landscape**

People often ask us “What do you do in the winter? Don’t you just hate winter?” No Way!!! We love it! For us it’s kind of like a three-month weekend. Sure, we have plenty of things to work on, maintaining equipment, preparing our plants and facilities for next spring, designing landscape projects for next year, reviewing and finalizing our spring orders, attending workshops and seminars, working on Cheryl’s “honey-do” list, ice fishing, but the slower pace and lack of urgency is a welcome change. We take the time to reflect on what went well this year, what we could have done better, and get ourselves recharged for next spring.

Winter is also the time we enjoy plants and good landscaping the most. Spring flowers are great. We certainly appreciate the cool summer shade of a large tree. The brilliant, but brief, fall color displays are nothing short of breathtaking. But it is during the cold, gray months of winter when we think ornamental plants and well-designed landscapes benefit people in this area the most. In our opinion, the natural winter landscape in our part of Ohio is pretty bland. Our woods lack the conifers, birches and aspen that offer some winter interest in the northern forests, and the evergreen rhododendrons, azaleas, and hollies found in states south of us. Some small trees and shrubs native to this area do provide a dash of winter color with berries and fruit. But the wild varieties tend to be sparse and birds pick them clean early in the season. The pallet of color and texture our landscape plants can add to the winter garden is really outstanding. The different shades of green, yellow, and blue conifer shrubs and trees are the first to come to mind. The maroon, scarlet, orange and gold fruit of the crabapples and hawthorns. The red, yellow and black berries on the viburnums. The coarse foliage and colorful berries of the blue hollies. The trunk and stem color of the birches and shrub dogwoods. The unique branching patterns of Pagoda Dogwood, Weeping Cherry, and Cotoneaster. The texture and movement of the ornamental grass. The orange and red rose hips. The brick red leaves still clinging to the oak branches. The list goes on.

## **Use Your Landscape For Holiday Decorating**

We all think of pine, spruce, and fir boughs, sprigs of fresh holly, and pine cones for decking the halls; but how about the other evergreens we have available? The many different varieties of juniper and arborvitae commonly found in our own backyards can be used for holiday decoration. Some boxwood or euonymus branches can add a little change of texture. How about some fresh sprigs of rosemary for a little fragrance? Stems of red and yellow twig dogwood add a splash of color, as do dried grass plumes and red chokeberries. See if there are any freeze-dried roses still hanging on the plants outside. Use your imagination and have fun.