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Boxwood losses: What happened?

Everyone experienced large losses this year with boxwood. New plantings and existing plantings alike were damaged or killed by winter burn. This has many contractors, property managers, and homeowners asking if they should stop using boxwood.



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The winter of 2013-2014 was very difficult on people. With record snowfall of over 90", we (people) were left dealing with mountains of snow, the constant fight of clearing off our cars, and shoveling every day. The winter of 2014-2015 was the perfect storm against broadleaf evergreens. This winter provided a minimal of snow coverage, and many days of extreme cold. These two items combined to do serious damage to boxwood, azaleas, and rhododendron.

The minimal snow coverage provided little to no insulating help to the plant material. Couple this with many days of -15 to -20 degree temps, and you have a winter that our area has not seen in many years. These two factors also created a situation that was near perfect for drying out of broadleaf evergreens exposed above the snow line, giving us the two tone hedges with brown tops and green bottoms.

To stop planting boxwood would be similar to saying a tornado blew down a tree, should I not put a tree back? Just because the weather damaged the plant material badly once in many years, you should not stop using it.

