

Why do I need a tree wrap? How long should I leave it on?

Young trees need some protection for their first couple of years. Sun scald can easily damage young, thin-skinned trees. On cold winter days, the sun can heat up bark to the point where the vascular system is stimulated. Then when the sun sets and temperatures drop rapidly, the active tissue is easily destroyed. Sun scald can be prevented by wrapping the trunk with a commercial tree wrap, plastic tree guards, or any other light-colored material. The wrap will reflect the sun and keep the bark at a more constant temperature.

There are advantages to leaving it on year round. A plastic tree wrap can protect your investment from mowers and weed trimmers. It can also help prevent rodents and other small critters from chewing on the tender young bark. If a tree becomes girdled (a band of bark is removed around the circumference) it may die.

Newly planted trees should be wrapped for at least two winters and thin-barked species up to five winters or more. A good rule of thumb to follow:

Leave the wrap on until the tree fills out the diameter of the plastic.