



Denver / Castle Rock / Boulder
303.337.6200

Monument
719.302.5117

Ft. Collins / Loveland / Greeley
970.221.1287

Longmont
720.204.1846

www.myswingle.com

Winter in October?

The mercury had problems rising in the thermometer. October 2009 was the second coldest October on record.

Five low temperatures were either tied or broken. Then, how about that snowstorm? The weather forecast was so accurate it was uncanny. The record lows will result in winter injury next spring, but for now let's focus on the 17 – 30 inches of snow that fell along the front-range. Thankfully most of the leaves had fallen minimizing branch breakage.

With favorable growing conditions last summer, plants grew more this year. This succulent growth is more apt to be bent by the snow storm.

Some branches will spring back on their own while others now hanging down are encroaching on sidewalks or drives. Some of these branches may be pruned. Now is an excellent time to prune. Others should be tied up. How should you go about this?

Often we head out to the garage and find whatever we've got on the shelf including string, twine, rope, speaker wire or lamp cord. None of this should be used. These materials are often forgotten causing abrasions, or worse yet, girdle the stems.

Before beginning any job, go out to a good garden center and pick up a coil of black plastic tie. This is a versatile material, lasts for years and sometimes may be reused.

For more permanent jobs, use screw eyes and clothesline wire from the hardware store. Putting a small screw eye into the branch does far less plant damage than wrapping it with wire for support.

When tying branches together, don't use a death-grip. Branches should have free movement. Trees and branches that are firmly tied and unable to move will develop weak wood, poor structure and be more apt to fail in a storm.

If the job looks too big for you to handle – it is. Only attempt small projects. If you need to get on a ladder to do this work – it is likely too difficult and you should seek the help of a professional tree care company.

We are pleased to have you as a special partner in our Swingle Expert Article content. You may reprint any or all parts of this article. Please credit *Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care*. Thank you.