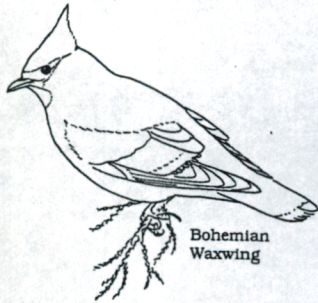


Each fall our attention turns to preparation for the upcoming winter. Often this includes the wrapping of small to mid-sized vulnerable shrubs, many of which produce berries. In many instances, these berries provide another food source for those birds that visit the Island each winter from more northern locales.

Wraps used to cover shrubs vary from burlap to very fine meshed green cloth to white or clear plastic netting material that has a mesh size of around 2 cm. These are available from many Island garden centres or hardware stores. One might think that a small to medium (1 - 2.5 cm) mesh size can protect the shrub while at the same time permit birds to safely access berries that the shrub produces. It is the mesh size that becomes important for those birds which attempt to harvest berries from shrubs during lean winters where natural sources of berries (eg. Mountain Ash etc) are reduced. Depending on how the shrub is wrapped, birds may attempt to eat berries through the wrapping, or attempt to get under the wrap to get at food that is "just out of reach". In both instances, depending on the wrap used, it may in fact become a death trap. As I have learned this past winter, the white or translucent plastic wrap that has a mesh size of approximately 2 cm is deadly to hungry birds.



This past winter saw a significant increase in the number of Bohemian Waxwings visiting Prince Edward Island. The good natural berry crops were consumed and it was not long before these sources were stripped bare. As the snow started to melt, the berries in the junipers in our front yard became exposed. Hungry Bohemian Waxwings started to congregate and eat the berries through the netting (2 cm mesh size). A few got inside the shrub, entering at the base of the plant so that they could get at berries deep inside. It was not long before two waxwings trying to get out of the junipers became enmeshed in the netting. Fortunately, we noticed their struggling and were able to safely extricate both birds from the netting. At that time, I just made a few large holes in the netting to allow the birds easier access and exit ports to the junipers.

Unfortunately, as the snow melted and lower portions of the junipers became exposed, the waxwings started to eat the newly exposed berries. Four birds managed to get their heads through the mesh and become entrapped. We were able to save only two of these birds. The other two either strangled to death or died of shock during their struggles to escape. Needless to say, the remaining netting immediately came off the junipers to ensure that this would not happen again.

In thinking about this tragedy, and based on my observations as to the number of people who use the white or translucent plastic netting (mesh size 1-3 cm) to wrap bushes, I would make the following recommendations:

- ◆ If you wish to protect berry producing shrubs - or any shrub for that matter, consider the use of burlap or fine meshed (< 0.5 cm) green cloth wrapping.
- ◆ Consider unique wrapping techniques using wood stakes as a support to allow one side (lee side) of the bush to remain open so that birds can use the bush for winter protection, and as a food source.
- ◆ Be careful in your selection of netting to protect gardens or fruit producing trees in summer. At least one local store is now selling a netting with a mesh size similar to the one mentioned above, as a "bird safe" netting. In my opinion, it is unlikely to be as safe as the manufacturer claims since the mesh size is basically the same as the mesh size of the netting that caused problems this past winter for us.

DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES IN THE MACLURES POND AREA

by Robert Harding

We have not done that much collecting at the MacLure's (or Strickland's) Pond but here's a list of what we have identified from that site and some other sites in the area. As I suspected, we did not encounter the Common Green Darner (*Anax junius*) at MacLure's Pond, or in the vicinity. While specimens have not yet been collected at this pond, I have no doubt they will be found there. The Common Green Darner is an interesting brute - it's not a year-round resident in the Maritimes, but migrates in the spring from New England. These southerners reproduce