

Frost Protection & Care

Winter's freezing weather can damage a number of landscape plants. In many cases, the damage is temporary and plants will recover in the warmer months. Generally, the recommended course of action right now is to have patience and let it recover with time.

PROTECTING PLANTS FROM THE COLD

1. Cover plants with protective fabric. We carry several options especially for this purpose. These can be laid directly on the plant. Other coverings can be used such as burlap, plastic or cotton sheets, but must be supported so they do not touch the plant leaves.
2. Spray plants with **Bonide Wilt Stop**. Make sure to do this before the freezing temperatures arrive so that the spray does not freeze on the foliage.
3. String non-LED (older) Christmas lights to warm the plant overnight.
4. Mulch the soil with 2-3 inches of organic materials such as micro bark or shredded cedar.
5. If we are headed into a cold period and it hasn't rained, make sure to water deeply. A well-hydrated plant is more frost resistant and moist soil stays warmer at night. Be especially careful of your plants in containers as they dry out more quickly.

FREEZE DAMAGE SYMPTOMS

Freezing temperatures will cause flowers, leaves and twigs to wilt, appear water-soaked and or turn brown or black. Flowers can be very cold sensitive and are usually killed outright, even on otherwise hardy plants.

WHAT TO DO

How to take care of frost-damaged plants will depend on what type of plant is damaged.

For **woody plants and frost-sensitive evergreens, trees and shrubs** - resist the temptation to remove the damage or prune plants. It acts as insulation. Damaged leaves and stems may protect dormant buds and stems not completely killed. These will be a source of new growth later. Delay pruning until after danger of frost, technically March 15th, but Mother Nature is in charge. Pruning too early can stimulate new growth which will be especially susceptible to future frost damage.

If you have some remaining **summer annuals** in your yard that are damaged by frost, these should be removed and discarded as they will not recover from a freeze. Your **winter annuals** are more hardy. You can remove the frost damaged flowers from pansies and primroses but leave the green parts.

Remove dead leaves, stems and flowers from tender **perennials**, but do not cut into the plant crowns (where the stem enters the ground) or any healthy green parts.

Roses are very cold tolerant and should go completely dormant in winter. The cold weather helps this process. Arm yourself with a good pair of gauntlet gloves and pruners. Remove any leaves left on the plant and prune in January or early February.

Do not expect to see signs of recovery until mid-February or later depending on weather conditions. Plants that require high temperatures for growth such as lantana, bougainvillea and hibiscus may not show signs of re-growth until April or later.

