

Winter Frost Damage

With an average of 300 days of sunshine, southern Arizona is a region for beautiful landscapes year round. But what happens when your evergreen shrub appears partially dead after sub-freezing temperatures? What about the plants in your yard that have dried and shriveled up completely?

Many people have asked me, "My plants are dying. What should I do?" Before you reach for your gardening tools, consider the expertise of Jack Kelly, Commercial Horticulture Agent with the Pima County Cooperative Extension.

Anytime we have a hard freeze like we did in December of 2006, you can reasonably expect plant damage to occur. If the freeze is particularly cold (less than 20 degrees F), and is long (more than 8 hours), many plants will freeze back. For citrus trees, damage may extend in to the last two years worth of growth. For other plants such as Bougainvillea and Lantana, freeze damage can occur all the way to the ground. Trees as well as Palms are susceptible to being damaged by freezing temperatures. However, while most trees will begin to recover in late March or early April, Palms will generally begin their recovery process once temperatures have reached 90 - 100 degrees during the daytime.

The general consensus amongst professionals in the field is to wait until spring to observe if and where the new buds will appear. Sure you can do a scratch test to look for green beneath the bark. But, even if there is no life to be found, you may still be surprised where re-growth will occur once the temperatures are warmer. Even if you find dead branches, you should not remove it until winter has passed. If there are any sub-freezing temperatures remaining in the forecast, the dead wood can serve as insulation to protect the plant from further damage.

If you find yourself terribly disappointed with the appearance of your landscape and you are considering in replacing the plants with replicas, think again. These probably offered your landscape a lush variety of greenery and vibrant blooms for nine months out of the year. Do yourself a favor, save yourself the money (especially after Christmas spending), and wait to see if it is capable of re-growth. Besides, you'll only be starting all over again with immature sized plants.

If you are interested in obtaining more information regarding ideas for replacement plants or anything else regarding your landscaping needs (if you live in an association, we can provide you with more information regarding the approved plants in your neighborhood), please feel free to contact us.

Plants That Are Less Susceptible To Freeze Damage:

Texas Ranger, Oleander, Hopseed Bush, Leatherleaf Acacia, Feathery Cassia, Desert Spoon, Creosote Bush, Willow Leaf Acacia. If you would like more information regarding plants that interest you, please contact us through our website below.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this article, including ideas or topics that you would love to hear us discuss in any future articles, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us at our website below. We will be writing an article as it relates to gardening in Marana the first week of every month in the Marana Weekly News.

La Cholla Landscaping

www.landscapingintucson.com