

Blue Bell Landscaping Inc.

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How can you help your landscape recover from the cold?

Many of my plants are brown.

How do I know when they are dead, and should be removed?

Brown leaves are just a hint of the damage that may have resulted from the cold. Wait a few weeks or more before making any decisions. As the weather warms up, plant portions often continue to decline. You may notice stems cracking and bark peeling away as further indication of the cold damage.

In about a month the extent of the cold damage can be detected.

Due to the recent freeze damage, our Crotons had to be cut back to the ground.

Will the plants still produce new growth, or should they be dug out and new ones planted?

Scratch the stems just below the ground. If they are green, you can expect some growth from the buds insulated from the cold damage by the soil. This growth could be slow in developing, as the buds are often immature. A wait of six to eight weeks after warm weather returns is common.

If I wet down my plants before a freeze, will this protect them?

No. Merely wetting down the foliage so that ice forms on the plant could be more damaging than doing nothing. Ornamental plants can be protected during a freeze by continually sprinkling the plants with water. Sprinkling must begin when the temperatures drop to 32°F & must continue until the temps rise above 32°F. Sprinkling must be such that the water is evenly distributed and ample enough to maintain a film of liquid water on all of the foliage surfaces. This practice is impractical and not recommended for homeowners.

Visit us on the web at:

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more on recovering from the cold ...

Our plants are damaged but appear to have survived the cold. Should I apply fertilizer now to encourage new growth?

A quick application of fertilizer too early may stimulate growth that could be damaged by cold later in the season. Wait until the normal feeding time which for most trees, shrubs, and vines is mid to late February. Wait to feed the lawn until late February or early March.

Will plants recover faster by watering?

Extra water won't help plants heal cold-damaged leaves and stems. This tissue is most likely dead and not capable of using watering.

It got quite cold at my house. Did the freezing weather help control the insects in the landscape?

You can probably relax for a month or two, but most pests survived the freeze. They huddled among the foliage and developing buds and were not affected by the cold. You may even have brought a few insects and mites indoors with plants to be protected from the cold.

The life cycles of mites and insects including aphids, whiteflies, scales and chinch bugs slow down during the cold, but are expected to resume activity when warm weather returns.

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