

The Scoop

on horticulture



Special Bulletin: After the Cold

As a follow-up to The Scoop, this special bulletin is aimed at addressing more specific actions to be performed after a freeze event.

Plant Material & Palm Pruning

- The only reason to prune immediately after a freeze is aesthetics. In an ideal situation, pruning should be performed after new growth is seen. However, in most cases, our clients are expecting immediate action to be taken. When this is the case, follow the tips below to ensure increased plant survivability.
- Prune dead material back into green wood at a 45 degree, angled cut just above the leaf axil where the new bud will emerge.
- If possible, do not prune palms until fronds are brown. Even bronzed fronds retain the ability to make food.

Turf

- Do not mow with frost on the turf.
- Keep an eye out for winter desiccation. This type of winter injury is common in winter when the dry winds, cold temperatures, and sunlight result in more water lost through transpiration than can be taken up by the roots.
- Keep turf watered appropriately. Excessive water will be wasted and could possibly damage the turf.

Fertilization

- **Normal fertilization is sufficient to produce plant recovery.** Additional fertilizer will produce a quick flush of new growth that could be damaged if more cold weather is on the way.
- Over-seeded turf should be fertilized right away to help jump start the rye grass.
- Annuals are another exception, and would benefit from additional feeding after a freeze event.

Irrigation

- **When temperatures reach the freezing mark, irrigation should not be running.** Check turf areas and landscape plants immediately for dry soil once temperatures rise again.
- Normal irrigation should be sufficient after a cold spell. Keep an eye out for dry areas and winter desiccation.
- If there is another freeze expected, make sure that the leaves have had time to dry before temperatures drop.

Did You Know?



On the morning of January 6th, temperatures in Daytona and Melbourne dropped to 28 degrees, breaking the previous record lows of 30 in Daytona Beach and 31 in Melbourne, both set on January 6, 1999.

Additionally, Orlando tied its record low of 31, also set in 1999. (cfnews13.com)

On January 11th, the National Weather Service reported 36 degrees at the Miami airport, beating an 82-year-old record of 37 degrees. It dipped to 42 degrees in Key West, one degree off the record and the second-coldest reading since 1873. (usatoday.com)



Frost-Damaged Plant Material



Schefflera 'Trinette'



Gold Mound Duranta



Crinum Lily 'Queen Emma'



Alexander Palm

Annuals

- If annuals were covered to protect from frost, remove covering as soon as possible.
- Annuals will most certainly need to be irrigated.
- Applications of a contact fungicide like Daconil and 20-20-20 are recommended. This will prevent fungus from forming on the damaged leaves and promote healthy plants and new growth.
- Daconil should be applied at 1 and 3/8 pints per 100 gallons of water.
- 20-20-20 should be applied at a rate of 1 Tbsp. per gallon.

Chemical Treatments

- Depending upon mode of action (contact or systemic), many pesticides' active ingredients are not effective around freezing temperatures.
- Round-up and other treatments should be postponed until temperatures reach a minimum of 45 degrees.

Palms

- It is important to pay extra attention to palms after a freezing event, as they are more susceptible to damage during and after the cold snap.
- Know that cold damage to palms may not be immediately identifiable, and it could take up to a year to see the full extent of harm.
- For severely damaged palm material, a treatment of bactericide and fungicide may be necessary. We recommend a bud drench of Kocide3000 at a rate of 1 Tbsp. per gallon of water with a follow up treatment 7-10 days later.

Documentation

- After a cold event it is important to document damaged plant material and turf.
- Photo documentation of sample plants damaged needs to take place.
- Send an email to property managers with the photos attached so that all parties are kept in the loop regarding cold damage.

For more information, see UF IFAS EDIS online publications ENH 80, ENH 92, and ENH 1.