



# Winter Freeze Damage

## **WHAT THE FRIGIDE COLD CAN DO TO A PLANT:**

In extended hard freezes, the water in between and within the cells of the plants will freeze, causing the cells to expand and rupture and resulting in damaged plant tissue. This type of damage is typically irreversible.

What is freeze damage? The effects present themselves differently depending how exposed the plant was and what variety the plant is. Sometimes it is just a matter of foliage damage with cold burned leaf tips and discoloration. In other cases, freeze damage to plants appears all the way into the roots or crown structure. This is the hardest type from which to recover.

## **BE PATIENT, ASSESS THE PLANT & DO NOT PRUNE YET:**

- **Don't Start Pruning Just Yet, or Removing Plants from the Landscape**
- **Resist the Urge to Fertilize – Until April**
- **Be patient and Keep Watering**
- **While you might think a plant is dead .... Wait a while ~ You might be surprised.**

Considerable patience will be needed in the evaluation of damage to landscape plants. Typically, it is easy to determine the fate of some plants .... But diagnosing the long term effect of cold damage to shrubs and trees is much harder. You may see some shrubs filled with areas of brown and drooping foliage – while other will wait a while then begin to show signs of stress. Some may also lose their leaves due to the freeze experience, but will leaf out again in Spring.

Be patient - Do not go straight for the pruners and cut everything back. It may take several days or weeks, or even months for plants to show any sign of damage ... if there was any at all.

**WOODY PLANTS ... LOOK AT THE STEMS** - You can check for life on woody plants and perennials by scratching the bark of stems and look for green color underneath. If you find green, your plant is still alive and doing well. If there is no green, or the stem is Split, Brittle and Peeling, it is probably dead.

## **WATER:**

It is actually best to water your cold-shocked plants. Water will help them recover from the trauma and stress. When plants experience a freeze, moisture is removed from their tissues. Watering them helps them rehydrate.

## **FERTILIZE:**

Fertilize your shrubs around the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, after all danger of frost has passed.

# SIGNS OF FREEZE DAMAGE

Bark Damage on Pittosporum



Tree Bark Damage



Live Oak Damage



Indian Hawthorn



Yaupon Holly Damage



Nellie R Stevens Holly Cold & Freeze Damage



Eleagnus



Arborvitae



Nandina



Loropetalum