



# Trees That Survived the Freeze of February 2021

Part 1 of 3

By: Steve Hipe  
Owner of Hope Valley Tree Farm

The record cold for central Texas was recorded in January 1949 at  $-19^{\circ}\text{C}$ , December 1989 at  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$ , and February 2021 at  $-14^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

I remember the freeze of December 1989; I was 35 years of age and I had built and owned an organic lawn fertilizer company called "Fertile Lawn Organic Systems". At that time, everyone was focused on preparing for Christmas, not a severe freeze. Well, the freeze came and so did Christmas, but when Spring came around, some trees died, but the shocking reality was that most of all St. Augustine lawns, which was the lawn of choice back then, died, never to come back. So, when I came to fertilize my customers' lawns that spring, there was nothing to fertilize but dead grass. One by one my customers refused my services but offered me the opportunity to replant their lawns and landscape with fresh new sod and plants. So, I purchased a new Kubota tractor and changed the name of my business to "Hope Valley Landscape Services", a business I continued for 20 years.

So, what does all this have to do with today, and how does this story save your trees and plants from the next freeze? Well sometimes it is left to chance which landscapes survive through our ever-changing weather, but mostly it comes down to how we prepare for the freeze because like it or not it's coming. In part two, I will discuss what I have learned in the last 35 years to prepare landscapes for our ever-changing weather conditions.

Steve Hipe is the owner of Hope Valley Tree Farm located in Bastrop, Texas. We grow 35 varieties of trees and privacy plants that will survive and thrive in Central Texas. We have 12,000 plus trees on our farm and we love it when the public comes to visit us on our 28-acre farm, and picks out their trees.

