

FOR RELEASE WEEK OF JANUARY 06, 2016

TITLE: THE BIG COVER UP

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Cold weather is here. Cold weather means keeping warm at our house. It is time to pull the covers up! This is important to plants too. Many plants need winter protection.

Most woody plants (tree and shrubs) should be fine. Do not prune or fertilize them at this time of year. Put two to three inches of mulch around the roots. Resist the temptation to prune the ones that lose their leaves. Prune the ones that do not bloom in the spring in late January and February. Prune the spring bloomers after they flower.

Now that the frost has killed back tender perennials and herbs, prune them back to about three inches tall. Mulch these plants. Tender herbs can have a thicker layer of mulch-up to six inches.

Tropical plants (banana, tropical hibiscus, etc.) can be protected by putting a wire cage around the plant and fill it with loosely packed mulch. The cage should be at least six inches wider than the plant on every side.

While you are pulling the cover up on plants, remember that they all need sunlight to survive. Covered plants can also stay too wet and rot. Make the cover up as light as possible and check plants regularly. Uncover them when you can.

Just remember cold weather means, "Pull up the covers, even for plants!"