

**FOR RELEASE WEEK OF MARCH 02, 2016**

**TITLE: COLD PROTECTION OF LANDSCAPE PLANTS**

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When a severe or sudden freeze is forecast and you know there are plants in your landscape susceptible to the cold, here are a few suggestions for helping them survive the ordeal:

- Old sheets or blankets can be thrown over plants to help trap and hold in heat from the soil and to protect them from the cold wind. Make certain the bottom of the covering is left open to the ground to help trap heat rising from the soil. Cardboard boxes placed over plants and held in place with a brick are also an excellent covering. Place the covering on during the late afternoon and remove it by mid-morning the next day.
- The graft union of newly planted roses, camellias, ornamental plums and ornamental cherries are most susceptible to freeze damage. One way of protecting them is by constructing a circular frame of chicken wire or hardware to wrap the graft union area (the swollen area near the base) with several layers of newspaper secured with cloth tape.
- Make certain all plants are well-mulched. If two or three inches of a mulching material are already in place and a severe freeze threatens, add two or three more inches for extra protection.
- Continue watering throughout the winter, at least once every two weeks if it doesn't rain. Our most severe freezes occur when cold, drying winds from the northwest combine with freezing temperatures. Plants can easily dehydrate if moisture is not present for the roots to absorb. Water also helps trap and hold heat in the soil.
- Avoid icing over plants. Spraying plants with water during a freeze to create a thick coating of ice is not a recommended practice for the home landscape. A heavy accumulation of ice can cause limb breakage and severe physical damage

to trees and shrubs. Also, during a severe freeze with high winds, ice will evaporate and actually pull heat from the plant causing the internal temperature of the plant to fall far below 32 degrees F.

Take precautions with your plants during a freeze.