

BUCHANAN'S

NATIVE PLANTS

5 Things You Can Do to Protect Your Plants from Cold

As we roll into cooler months, we need to make efforts to protect certain plants in our gardens. Plants that may need our help include young citrus trees, basil, plumeria, hibiscus, and most other tropicals. Heavy feeders like roses, gardenias, and azaleas should not be fertilized during winter. Bring inside tender potted plants on cold nights. For those in ground, a few easy steps may be the difference between life and death in your garden.

- 1. Mulch** Mulching your garden has about 101 benefits, especially in the winter. When you mulch, you add a layer of insulation to your soil, helping keep the root zone of your plants happy and at an even temperature. We recommend using the Native Hardwood Mulch by The Ground Up at a 3-4" layer for your beds. Treat your acid loving plants (roses, gardenias, camellias, etc.) to a lofty layer of pine straw.
- 2. Water** Monitoring your water is another key factor in protecting your plants from cold damage. As we move into colder weather, begin weaning your plants off water and give them only what they really 'need' which for in ground plants may be as little as once every 7-10 days if no rain. This works to harden off your plants and make them tough. Although you are watering less, giving your plants a long watering just before an expected freeze is vital in keeping them protected. Using a soaker hose around the base of the plant is an easy way to give the plants the deep watering they need.
- 3. Frost Cloth** Frost cloth is critical to frost tender plants, especially those on the north side of a house. It acts as a barrier between the plant and cold winter winds and keeps the plants inside several degrees warmer. Ideally, Frost cloth should be draped over the tops of the plants down to the soil where it should be secured with anchoring pins. Take the frost cloth off during the warmer hours of the day to allow some direct sunlight. Under no circumstances should plastic sheets or plastic tarps be used to cover a plant.
- 4. Plant Protectors** Plant Protectors are small dome shaped covers that easily fit over small plants and act as a mini greenhouse. These are ideal for smaller plants or frost tender veggies (and basil!) you want to maintain or get a head start on. Plant Protectors snap open at the top to let in sunlight while remaining insulated.
- 5. Plankets** If wrapping your plants with Frost Cloth doesn't quite work for you or your situation, then there is a cool alternative, Plankets! Plankets are essentially preformed Frost Clothes that fit snugly over your plants and tie off at the base with a simple drawstring. These come in especially handy with plants in large planters or areas where securing Frost Cloth may prove difficult.

This and other plant care tip sheets are available at Buchanansplants.com.

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