

BUCHANAN'S

NATIVE PLANTS

After a Freeze

After a freeze, some plants may show signs of frost damage. Frost damage can reveal itself as dark areas on leaves, a burnt appearance, or wilting. Here are some things you can do to help protect and nurture a plant with frost/freezing damage.

1. Don't prune: Although frost damage can be unsightly, you should not cut back dead or damaged leaves or branches. This is very difficult for many gardeners, as cutting something unhealthy off their plant feels like the natural thing to do. However, the damaged leaves still have benefit by acting to protect the remaining plant from wind and chill. Besides, pruning promotes tender new growth, which is the last thing we want before winter is over.

Keep your shears away until spring (late February for perennials and early March for tropicals) when the weather begins to warm. Spring is the time to cut back dead matter and let new growth take over. Feel free to trim plants all the way to the ground, just leaving a few inches of old growth. After you prune, use a fertilizer. Microlife 6-2-4 is an outstanding organic fertilizer that will help your plants with the production of new leaves and branches.

2. Add Compost/Mulch: It's never a bad time to add compost and mulch. In fact, adding these two during the winter helps to further insulate plants' rootzones while supplying plants with essential nutrients and the microbiology they need to stay healthy and happy. We recommend Vegan Compost from The Ground Up, because it contains a diverse range of microorganisms and is full of both macro and micro nutrients for plants. For mulch, the Native Hardwood is best, double-ground and aged, apply a 2-3 inch layer.
3. Prevent further damage: A damaged plant may not have what it takes to make it through another freeze. Protect these tender plants by bringing them inside if possible. If this isn't possible, wrap them in frost cloth. Cover the entire plant and secure well at the base to ensure no wind can move under the cloth. Wrapping a plant may make the difference between life and death in the garden. Before a hard freeze, water your garden well. Water saturated soil holds heat better than a dry soil. Keep damaged plants well watered but be mindful that plants need less water in cooler weather.