

WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH EVERYONE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!!!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Plants Don't Need Water in the Winter, Do They?	1
Prevention and Care for Plant Frost Damage	2
Monthly Checklist	2

Plants Don't Need Water in the Winter, Do They?

There is often debate over the need to irrigate landscape shrubs and trees during the winter months in the metro area where we live. Too often, the answer to the question is that supplemental irrigation is not needed. That would be fine if your landscape consisted of Bursage and Cactii, but most of us do not fall into that category or if we received sufficient rainfall regularly.

To better explain, one must have an understanding of the growth habits of their plant material. Just because you are not experiencing plant growth during our cooler months, doesn't mean that there is not a lot going on that you can't see. Many trees and shrubs used in our landscapes spend the winter months storing carbohydrates and developing root systems. These activities require soil moisture and are a vital part of the up and coming growing season when top growth is observed.



Shrubs that have been starved for water all winter are often slow to respond the following spring. They may even have suffered permanent damage due to insufficient moisture in the root zone.

Unfortunately you will not typically see the results of drought damaged roots until later in the spring. Conversely, those that have received the appropriate amount of water during the winter will green up quickly and put on the colorful display that we all appreciate. Think of how the surrounding desert "comes to life" in the spring following a winter when we have seen a nice rainfall.



This is not to say that we should continue to irrigate our plant material at the same rate we did in July. Obviously, we should be watering far less. As a matter of fact, by January, we should only be using about 10% to 15% of the water on our plants and trees compared to what they received during the hot summer months. As a general rule trees should be watered once every 2 - 3 weeks and plants should be watered once every 1 - 2 weeks. Remember that we do not need to flood the plant and surrounding area, just water enough to maintain a good soil moisture. And don't forget, if we get a good rain, you may be able to skip a watering cycle or two.

Prevention and Care for Plant Frost Damaged

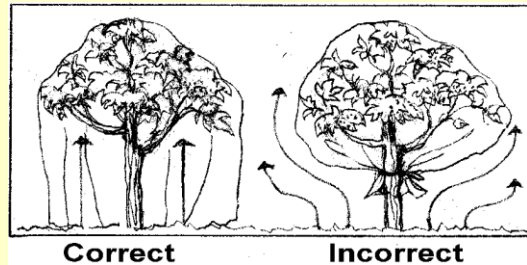
Frost can typically occur in the valley anytime between the end of November through February. A common sign of frost damage is darkening of leaves and death of stems or shoots. Winter annuals are sensitive to frost but as with all plant material there are ways to help protect them.

Preventing Frost Damage:

1. Plant selection is a good step in preventing frost damage. Most of the native desert plants are tolerant to frost damage.
2. Plant frost sensitive plants in more sheltered areas.
3. Items like walls, boulders and homes give off heat that they have collected during the day to help give warmth at night.

Reducing Heat Loss:

1. Cover plants at night with a frost cloth or fabric sheet. Make sure the cloth goes completely to the ground to allow the heat from the ground to exit up into the plant.



2. Make sure to remove the frost cloth every morning after the temperatures get above 36 degrees to allow the plant to warm up with the sun light.

Frost damaged plants should not be trimmed back until later February or into March when the potential threat of frost is minimal. By leaving the frost damaged material on the plant it will help protect from further die-back.



Tree which was damaged due to freeze



Monthly Landscape Checklist

Plant Renovation List (Common Type Plants)

- √ Sages, especially starting Heavenly Cloud species
- √ Mexican Honeysuckle
- √ Juniper
- √ Myoporium
- √ Angelita Daisy
- √ Deer Grass
- General Irrigation Setting (Actual times will vary depending on the precipitation rate of your system)
- √ Winter Rye Grass Turf irrigated using typical pop-up sprinklers: 6 – 8 minutes one time per week.

- √ Bermuda Grass Turf should now be dormant but to help sustain a healthy root system, water once every 4 – 6 weeks to help maintain steady soil moisture.
- √ Drip irrigation for Plants: 20 minutes one time every two weeks. These times are for ornamental type plants. Native or xeriscape plants will require less.
- Drip irrigation for Trees: 25 minutes one
- √ time every 3 – 4 weeks. These times are for ornamental type trees. Native or xeriscape trees will require less.

Please remember that these are general recommendations and depending on your system you may need to adjust watering times up or down.