



## Freezing Weather

By Jason Aguilar

We have been getting a lot of questions this time of the year about the Cold weather. These questions range from what plants to cover, how to cover and what material to use for covering. When we get these questions, we are more than happy to help. The more information you have the better equipped you are to keep your plants as healthy and safe as possible.

As I drive around the county, I notice when we are expecting a freeze, a lot of sensitive plants are exposed to the elements and most likely will be damaged or in some cases even die.

One of the most common issues I see is people covering their plants with tarps, trash bags or other plastic materials. This method will cause more damage to the plant. NEVER USE PLASTIC...Because plastic does not "breathe" like cotton and creates moisture between the plastic and the leaves that are touching the plastic. The moisture will freeze and the damage will show where the plastic was touching.

The other common issue I see is people forgetting to turn off their irrigation on a freezing night or thinking it's ok to run. The average homeowner's irrigation system runs 30-60 minutes per zone. By leaving the system on, the plants will be wet and the water will freeze on the leaves and create more damage to the plant. Commercial farmers will run irrigation on a freezing night to protect their plants. The big difference between a commercial farmer and a residential homeowner is that the farmer will turn the irrigation on right before the temperatures drop below 32 degrees, and WILL NOT turn the water off until temperatures are above 32 degrees. The water stays on for hours, pumping well-water that is warmer than 32 degrees.

The last common issues that we see and hear about are the customers that cover properly, but still get damage. The best analogy I use and tell people is if you are in bed and you're a little cold, a light sheet will do. But, if you're really cold, that light sheet will not work and a heavier blanket or quilt would be best. This works the same for plants. If we're expecting a freeze that drops down to 30 degrees, then a light cotton blanket or frost blanket would work. Now if we're expecting mid 20's or colder night, that single blanket will not work. You will need to double or triple the blankets to create as much insulation as possible.

If you have a cold sensitive palm, the best way to protect it is to use a small ladder (If needed) to tie or bungee the palm fronds (leaves) up. Why, you might ask? Well you are doing three strategic steps. First, by protecting the center bud of the palm, second by reducing the surface areas to cover and third, it makes the palm more manageable to cover.

**Here is a basic check list to use when a freeze is expected.**

1. Turn off your irrigation
2. Determine how cold your area is expecting, is it going to be a 30-degree night or a 20-degree night.
3. Identify the plants need to be covered.
4. Use cotton sheets (NO PLASTIC) and cover the plant entirely. You might need more than one sheet depending on freeze.
5. It's best to take the sheets off during the day and water the plant at the base and recover at night if needed.

Here at Anson Nursery, we are always available to answer any questions pertaining to your plants. You can reach us by phone, website or Facebook. We do sell the frost blanket if you need it, which is the same material we use for our own plants. Mother Nature is always unpredictable and will keep you on your toes. These techniques listed above will help protect your plants as best as possible. Remember, the coldest temperatures are usually right before day break.

I hope this article was informative and helpful as we go into our coldest month of the year. We wish you the best of luck and look forward to seeing you at the nursery.

Thanks for being great customers!!  
Jason

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