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## **Preparing your Yard for Freezing Weather**

The very first thing to do is to water! Unless your yard is already wet, thoroughly water all of your plantings - the lawn, the flowerbeds, trees, containers, the works - making sure to water early enough in the day that no water remains on the leaves of your plants by nightfall, or whenever the real cold starts blowing in. For a light nip of cold, this is normally all you'll need to do for plants that are meant to make it through our winter. For containers, pull small containers inside or into the garage overnight, and cover any containers too large to haul in with a frost cloth if they contain anything tender. Cold-tolerant plantings are just fine outside in a sufficiently large container. Mulch any container you're leaving outside for any reason! Add mulch to your flowerbeds if the mulch has thinned so that you have a good 2 inch depth of mulch over the soil.

Most cold tolerant palms will not have to be wrapped in our area for light freezes. Wrap any palm with a frost cloth before a severe ice storm, or for temperatures below 25 degrees on cold-tolerant palms (Windmill, Mediterranean, etc.) planted within the past two years. The longer a palm is in ground, the more cold-tolerant it will become, needing protection only for truly bad ice storms and freezes. If you're not certain of the cold tolerance of your own palm, or aren't sure exactly how cold we're going to get, err on the side of safety and wrap it. Once any serious cold event is done, unwrap the palm until the next time it's necessary to wrap - your palm will appreciate the light.

Sheets, burlap, plastic and blankets are poor substitutes for a good frost cloth! Frost cloth doesn't hold moisture and thus won't hold cold rain against the leaves of your plants, only to then freeze, or burn your leaves as soon as we get a sunny day like plastic will. Be prepared, plan for how much frost cloth you will need, and purchase it before we get a freeze warning so you have it on hand. Frost cloth tends to sell out quickly when a freeze is about to hit. If you're careful with how you use and store frost cloth, you'll be able to reuse it for several years.

Also, detach waterhoses from faucets, and make sure all outdoor faucets are firmly turned off and covered. Turn your sprinkler system off if it's still on automatic. This is the time of year you should run your sprinkler system manually on an as-needed basis.

If you have any questions on specific plantings, please feel free to call us at (972) 475-5888 and press 2 for the Garden Center. We'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.