

Frozen Plants

By: Melinda Sperl

It is hard right now to look at all the yards with the brown plants and freeze damage. Many of our favorite perennials would now be dormant anyway and, unless they were covered, have frozen back to the stalk. Most will recover easily enough from this weather unless we get some more hard freezes this year. One big key factor to save them now is to leave your plants alone and let nature do its own recovery. Do not start trimming the dead off your plants unless absolutely necessary.

Many plants growing in the Houston area are perennials that have extensive underground root systems and while the top growth may go dormant or freeze, most of the roots will recover and regrow. Couple the freeze with the stress of the drought and realize that a lot of plants were barely recovering only to get frozen out of the ground. What is needed now is patience which is asked often of gardeners as we want to get out and get our hands dirty trimming our plants at the first sight of sun. Remember that we usually get another good freeze around Valentine's Day so hold off until after that.

If you really must work in the yard, this is an excellent time to trim trees. The sap is dormant now so the tree will recover well and should not be as prone to insects and disease. Proper tree pruning will be next week's article as it is imperative to have a good cut so as not to damage your tree.

Happy Gardening!

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