



DALLAS ARBORETUM  
AND BOTANICAL GARDEN

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Photos available upon request**

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## **The Dallas Arboretum: How To Protect Your Plants This Winter**

**DALLAS, Texas, December 7, 2017** – With freezing weather approaching, it is important to take precautions to ensure your plants are protected from extreme weather conditions. Following a few simple steps prescribed by Dave Forehand, Dallas Arboretum vice president of gardens, will enable your plants to survive the sometimes-harsh North Texas cold spells.

### **Water plants before freeze:**

First, water plants before a freeze, particularly the plant root zone. Water acts like a blanket insulating the roots. This makes the plant stronger against a freeze. When plant cells are full of water, they are less likely to be subject to frost damage. If possible, water a day or two before a freeze and make sure to water the entire root zone of the plant. This is especially important in newly planted trees and shrubs. Try watering early in the day so plants have time to absorb water before a freeze. If at all possible, avoid watering the foliage. If you have an irrigation system, hand watering might be the best option for certain locations. Keeping water off the foliage prevents the formation of ice on leaf material which can cause breaks and more damage.

### **Cover cold sensitive plants:**

Cover them with blankets, sheets or towels. Do not use plastic because it is not breathable and will freeze to the plants causing damage. When daytime temperatures rise above freezing, it is important to remove the cover because, if left under cover all day, temperatures under the blankets can get too warm, damaging the plants and waking them from dormancy.

### **If possible, use frost cloth:**

Frost cloth acts as a blanket and helps trap heat. Make sure that you secure the cloth entirely around the plant and tighten to the soil using fabric pins or bricks (anything that will hold it down firmly will work). Frost cloth is made from a product that “breathes,” and this cloth helps against burn caused by other materials. Purchase frost cloth months in advance, if possible. When the

threat of a freeze is coming, frost cloth sells out quickly. Do not use frost cloth when there is a chance of snow. Otherwise, it will cause more damage breaking plants from the weight of the snow.

**Take care of plants constantly:**

The healthier your plants are, the more prone they are to handle stress. Proper water and maintenance throughout the growing season will help in the winter months. It is also important to select the right plant for your area. Check to make sure that the plant material you select is appropriate for your location. Check out USDA plant hardiness zone map to see what zone you live in. This information will help you purchase the best plant material for your zone.

**Move plants inside, especially with high winds:**

When high winds are a threat, it is a good idea to move potted plants into a shed or garage. Although plants don't feel wind-chill, cold winds quickly dry them out. Most plants can survive upper 30-degree temperatures easily in a shed or garage because these areas usually don't drop below freezing until severe weather in February.

For more plant tips, visit [www.dallasarboretum.org](http://www.dallasarboretum.org).

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