



## Winter Protection For Plants

1. Choose plants that are recommended for our winter hardiness zones (Zones 8 and Zone 9 for San Antonio)
2. During late fall, hold off on pruning or fertilizing plants (except seasonal annuals) which might stimulate tender new growth that can be damaged by the cold.
3. Mulch to regulate plunging temperatures that are most damaging to plant tissues.
4. Water plants during the morning/day when freezing temperatures are expected the following evening.
  - Dry plants suffer more damage.
5. Cover susceptible plants in the event of a predicted freeze.
  - Use commercial frost cloths or old sheets and blankets and secure them around all sides of the plant down to the ground.
  - NEVER use plastic to cover plants.
  - Wrapping plants with incandescent Christmas lights and plugging them in before covering them with cloth creates a greenhouse effect and keeps plants warm and toasty.
  - Once the cold subsides, remove plant protection so your plants can receive the warmth and sunshine during the day.
6. Grouping container plants together allows them to share their heat and also makes it easier to cover with winter protection cloths when needed.
7. Wait to prune back plants that have gotten bitten by a freeze.
  - The browned, damaged tissue can still serve as a protection in the event of future freezes.
  - Hold off until you can really see if the plant is not going to bounce back (usually early spring).