February Gardening Guide 2011
By Patricia Porchey

Q. My yard has so much cold damage; it looks terrible. What can I do?
A. The best action is no action at this time. Following these maintenance practices will minimize the damage that has already occurred and prevent additional damage in the weeks ahead.

Don’t

- Prune those ugly brown leaves and branches. If you scratch the bark, you will usually find it is still green which means it will leaf out again as soon as the weather turns warm.
- Prune those ugly brown leaves and branches. Those unattractive leaves are actually providing a protective covering for the lower parts of the plant should we receive another cold blast.
- Prune those terminal branches that are no longer viable. Pruning will encourage new flushes of growth that will be the most vulnerable part of the plant should we encounter another cold spell.
- Prune those partially brown fronds on your palms. If there is still green on any part of the leaf, that leaf is still producing energy for the plant.
- Prune those brown fronds on your palms. Unlike our woody plants that have their crown underground, growth on a palm initiates from the bud. Exposing the bud to more cold air, especially for the more cold-sensitive palms, increases the likelihood of their death.
- Water the grass more than it needs. In the winter when the grass goes into dormancy, its water needs are reduced.
- Mow that brown lawn. If you look under the topmost layer, you will still see green growth. That top layer is protecting the lower leaves. Wait to mow until you see enough green growth to warrant it.
- Fertilize that brown lawn until the end of February.
- Reseed with Bahia or Bermuda grass seed now. Those grass seeds need the warm soil of late March or early April to germinate. However, you can plant ryegrass seed for a temporary green until your lawn recovers.

Do be patient. Spring will release the lush growth and flowers that we’ve come to expect in Florida.

PLANTING GUIDE

Vegetables & Herbs: Anise, basil, beets, borage, cantaloupe, carrots, catnip, celery, chervil, chives, collards, comfrey, coriander, corn, cucumber, cumin, dill, eggplant, endive, garlic, green beans, kohlrabi, leek, lemon balm, lettuce, marjoram, mint, mustard, onion, oregano, parsley, peas, pepper, potato, pumpkin, radish, rosemary, sage, sweet potato, tarragon, tomato, turnip, and watermelon.

Annuals: Ageratum, alyssum, Amaranth, Begonia, browallia, Calendula, Cosmos, dusty miller, Gazania, geranium, Lobelia, marigold, nasturtium, pansy, Petunia, Phlox, Salvia, snapdragon, Statice, stock, strawflower, and Verbena.

Perennials: African iris, Agapanthus, Amaryllis, Amazon lily, aster, Aztec lily, Caladium, Cannas, calla lily, Clivia, Crinum lily, Dianthus, foxglove, Gerbera, hollyhock, Shasta daisy, society garlic, spider lily, Tithonia, and Viola.
**Fruits in Season:** Banana, black sapote, carambola, cherimoya, citrus (calamondin, grapefruit, key lime, lemon, lime, orange, and tangerine), Indian jujube, kumquat, loquat, Mysore raspberry, papaya, and strawberry.

**Blooming Plants:** Bush daisy, Bottlebrush, Bougainvillea, Carolina yellow Jessamine, fuchsia skullcap, Kalanchoe, lion’s ear, orchid tree, Poinsettia, powder-puff plant, purple Tabebuia, silver trumpet Tabebuia, trumpet vine, Turk’s cap and Walter’s Viburnum.

**Upcoming educational classes:**
Register online [http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu](http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu) or call 861-9900.

- Organic Vegetable Gardening, Orange Blossom Community Garden, 18th & Orange, 1:00 p.m. February 5
- Composting Workshop, Phillippi Estate Park, 12:00 p.m. February 9
- Household Pests, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. February 9
- Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Creating Your Florida Yard, Longwood Park, 10:30 a.m. February 12
- Chinch Bugs & White Grubs, Shamrock Park, 2:00 p.m. February 17
- Rain Barrel Workshop, Woodmere Park, 10:00 a.m. February 19

- Starting Plants from Seeds, Laurel Community Garden, 10:30 a.m. February 19
- Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles, Elsie Quirk Library, 10:00 a.m. February 22
- Invasive Insects, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. February 23
- Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles, North Port Library, 6:30 p.m. March 1
- Composts: Preparation & Uses, Phillippi Estate Park, 12:00 p.m. March 2
- Good Bugs in the Garden, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. March 2
- Creating Rain Gardens, Shamrock Park, 2:00 p.m. March 3
- Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Creating Your Florida Yard, Gulf Gate Library, 1:30 p.m. March 4

**For information**
The **Master Gardener Help Desk** now has an email address: mghelpdesk@scgov.net to answer questions. It is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-Noon and 1:00-4:00 p.m. You can call (941-861-9807) or visit our office at Twin Lakes Park on Clark Road east of I-75 with landscape questions. We also have weekly satellite help desks at the four south county libraries, Gulf Gate Library and the Phillippi Farmhouse Market.

(Patricia Porchey is an Urban Horticulture Agent with University of Florida/IFAS Sarasota County Extension. Website: [http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu](http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu))

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