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We are now in the thick of winter. Since many of our landscape plants are considered tropical or sub-tropical, we begin seeing frost damage on plants, like Lantana, when temperature hit the low 30’s, while other plant don’t show damage until temperatures have been below freezing for a number of hours.

Frost blankets seem to be the favorite choice in our region, providing up to 8-9 degrees of protection. However, they are often used incorrectly. Here are a few helpful hints to make sure you are using protective frost blankets correctly:

* Use cloth or paper, **never** use plastic!
	+ Sheets or blankets, must be removed daily
	+ Frost cloth can be left on for a few days
* Drape plant from top all the way to the ground
* Do not allow any openings (trap heat rising from ground under cloth)
* Do not gather the drape around trunk
* Allow drape to cover all the way out to drip line, if possible
* Wrap trunks of young citrus trees loosely to the ground (can be left all winter)

Additional steps to help protect your plants from the cold:

* Lights, Christmas lights at bottom of plant can radiate heat
* Water under canopy adds heat: when water cools, energy is released=heat!
* Don’t Fertilize- new growth is more sensitive to frost damage
* Don’t Prune- don’t prune sensitive plants until after treat of frost (late Feb.)
* Don’t Overprotect- allow plants to harden off, gradually exposed to cold weather





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