



Featured Article

FROST

According to the *Farmer's Almanac*, frost typically starts to occur in our area in November and can last as late as the end of April. It is not always easy to predict, even with the best of Internet weather information. But there are measures that you can take to minimize frost damage to your plants.

But first - how does frost form? Under a clear sky, overnight cooling of the air causes water vapor to condense into ice crystals. Do temperatures have to be below freezing before frost forms? Yes and no. Yes, because the temperature of the water molecules must be at or below the freezing point. And no, because temperatures are typically measured at four feet or more above the ground. So, while your local weather source may report an overnight low of 37°, the surface temperature at ground level is generally colder.

How can you protect your plants and lawn from frost damage? First, it is not necessary to 'insulate' them to protect them from a light frost. A simple covering of burlap or cloth will often do the trick. However, there is not much that can be done for your lawn. And it will bounce back in the spring. A dose of fertilizer in late fall will keep the grass looking greener and will also minimize frost damage.

Plants vulnerable to frost should be planted in protected areas out of direct exposure, such as next to a building or under the canopy of a tree. The plants will absorb the energy from the adjacent objects or structures. Trees are less vulnerable to frost because they are higher off of the ground and they emit energy toward the ground and not upward toward the sky.

The coldest temperatures occur right before sunrise. The colder the temperature, the harder the frost. Hard frost (below 28°F), typically occurs in January and or February. Bougainvillea and other similar plants are extremely vulnerable to the cold and will usually not survive a hard frost.