

FBMG Help Desk  
**Question of the Week**

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It was 38 degrees in my yard this morning.  
I am worried about my plants.

*Lets take a look...*



Keep your eye on the weather.

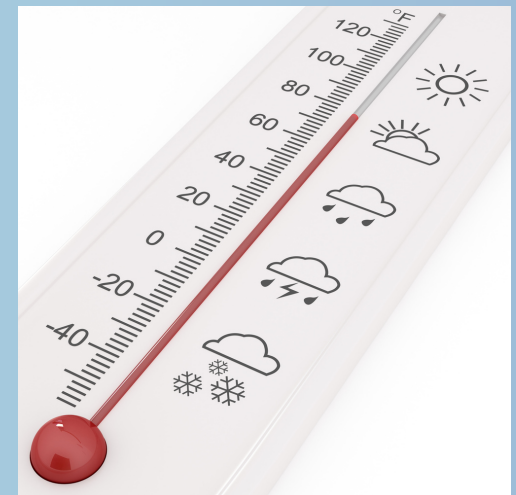
Stay tuned to the local forecast.

The long-range forecast will keep you informed and help you make decisions.



*Be Prepared! Gather ahead of time;*

- *Frost cloth*
- *Old blankets*
- *Non LED christmas lights*
- *Handtruck*
- *Wheel Barrow*
- *Bricks or stones*
- *Mulch or extra soil*



# Protecting your container plants

## Outdoor container plants require preparation to protect from the cold

**Plants grown outdoors in containers respond differently to a frost or freeze than plants grown in the ground. You will need to prepare these plants for a temporary move indoors:**



- Obtain a hand truck or wheelbarrow to assist with moving the container
- Water the plant prior to moving the container
- Preferably move the container to a spot in the home with similar light exposure. If not possible, consider grow lights.
- Be aware of the toxicity of the plants - some plants are poisonous to children and pets - be sure these are kept away (on a counter, in a room with limited access, etc.)
- Once the danger of frost or freeze has passed, you can move the plants back to their previous location



**If it is impossible to move an outdoor container, you need to protect the container by covering, tenting, providing additional heat source via non-LED outdoor lights, etc.**

# Covering May Be Necessary

If the plant is in the ground and moving is not an option then tenting aka covering is an option.

It doesn't have to be fancy!



A tent/covering can be many things.

- *sheets, frost cloth, tarps, blankets, cardboard boxes*
- *plastic or cloth*

- *Tenting or covering a plant provides a way of trapping the heat stored during the day and preventing radiation of this stored heat to a clear sky.*
- *Wind is always an issue, so plan accordingly - use of bricks, buckets of water, stakes may be necessary to keep the tent from being blown away*
- *Make sure the covering goes all the way to the ground to assure that the radiant heat from the ground is utilized as an additional heat source.*
- *Cover your plant as late in the day as practical to allow sunlight to heat the ground and the plant as much as possible prior to covering.*



Sometimes a tree needs to be banked

## *An extra layer of insulation.*

If the tree has been grafted, banking soil on the trunk is helpful in insulating the graft.

Soil is the media of choice as opposed to mulch or leaves.



*Photo from the Tropical Fruit Forum*

- *Bank soil against the trunk of the tree to just above the graft union.*
- *Be sure to use soil and not mulch as soil will trap and release heat slowly to the plant. Conversely, mulch reflects heat and is not as efficient at trapping or storing the heat from the sun.*
- *If the tree is a citrus, be certain to remove the soil from around the roots after the frost/freeze danger has passed as citrus roots are very shallow and will suffer if left too deep*

***Do you have questions  
about your home  
landscape and plants?***

***Contact the Fort Bend  
Master Gardener Help Desk***

***Email:  
FortBendmg@ag.tamu.edu***

***Phone:  
281-341-7068***

***The Help Desk is manned  
Monday thru Friday,  
9am-Noon***

***How To Prepare Your Plants For Cold Weather  
- Texas A&M Today (tamu.edu)***

***With freezing weather on the way, plants need  
care, too - AgriLife Today (tamu.edu)***

***article.Oct-Nov.Preparing-for-Freeze.pdf  
(fbmg.org)***

***15 tips to prepare your garden for winter -  
AgriLife Today (tamu.edu)***

