



**FBMG Help Desk**  
**Question of the Week**

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**My Live Oak tree is dropping all its leaves. Is it sick?  
What should I do?**

*Relax, it is normal this time of year.  
Let's take a look...*

# Live Oaks Are Known as Evergreens

## *Actually, They Are Not True Evergreens.*

Leaf dropping is normal and not a disease. The tree is not dying. In a short time you will see new leaves and flowers.



- *In late winter/early spring as the weather begins to warm as new leaves start to emerge, live oaks drop their old leaves.*
- *The tree may look sick.*
- *The leaves may be yellow or even a bit spotted.*
- *This may appear to happen overnight.*
- *This may appear to be sporadic in the landscape as they don't all drop their leaves at the same time, it may take weeks.*

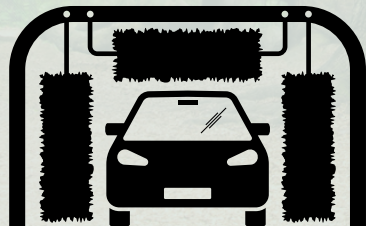


# The Live Oak Says Spring is Coming

*Relax and enjoy the coming Spring!*

*Live Oak Flowers are Great Contributors to the Yellowish Pollen  
often prevalent late winter/early spring!*

*To verify that it is normal  
leaf drop, check to see if  
new buds are forming  
where the leaf was. You  
should see new growth in  
approximately a week to  
10 days.*



# Spanish Moss Is Related to Pineapples

**Spanish Moss frequently seen on live oaks is actually an air plant aka an epiphyte!**

*Both plants thrive in humid environments and are able to draw moisture from the air.*

*Pineapples can grow on trees, however, are most often grown on the ground.*

*Unlike Pineapple, Spanish Moss is not an edible plant.*



*Home to a variety of insects, lizards, birds and small animals.*



# Resurrection Ferns and Ball Moss

In addition to Spanish Moss there are two other epiphytes frequently seen on live oak trees.



Ball Moss is actually multiple plants that form into a ball shape. The plant flowers on stalks usually 3-4" long and it's seeds become airborne facilitating the plant's spread.

*Not harmful to your tree: Epiphytes are plants that anchor to another plant for support only. They obtain all their nutrients and water from the air around them. Live Oak trees are often decorated with one or more of these. Both Plants are host and/or food to a number of insects and small animals.*

Resurrection Ferns are able to withstand dry periods and drought losing up to 97% of their water and shrivel up, looking like a mass of dead leaves. When it rains the plant turns green again and extends its fronds, which can measure up to 10".



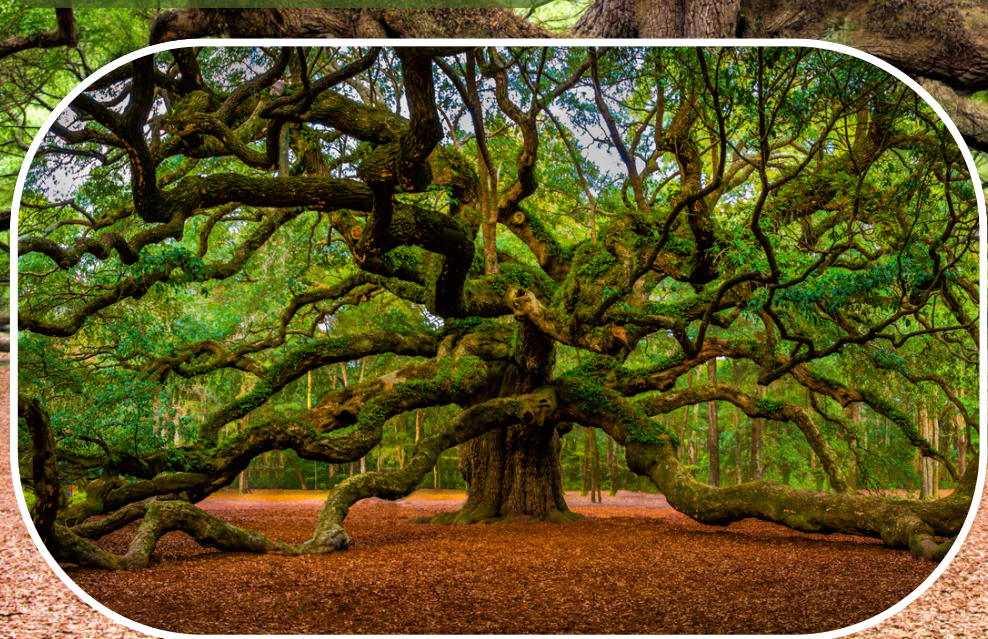
*Do you have questions about your home landscape and plants?*

*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*



*[Spanish Moss Is Related to Pineapples - UF/IFAS Extension Suwannee County \(ufl.edu\)](#)*

*<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep485>*

*[Download PDF \(PLPA-111\)](#)*

*<https://plantclinic.tamu.edu/2011/03/30/annual-texas-live-oak-leaf-drop>*

*[Live Oak | Home & Garden Information Center \(clemsn.edu\)](#)*

*[HGIC 2006, Oak Diseases & Insect Pests.](#)*

*<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/websites/FamousTreesOfTexas/TreeLayout.aspx?pageid=18222>*

*[Quercus fusiformis \(Escarpment live oak\) | Native Plants of North America \(wildflower.org\)](#)*

*[Why is My Live Oak Dropping Leaves? - Texas Trees Foundation](#)*

*[Live Oaks are a Texas Landscape Mainstay - AgriLife Today \(tamu.edu\)](#)*

*[Quercus virginiana Mill \(usda.gov\)](#)*

*[Live Oak | Home & Garden Information Center \(clemsn.edu\)](#)*

*[Louisiana Plant ID | Quercus virginiana \(live oak\) \(lsu.edu\)](#)*

*[Live Oak - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences \(ufl.edu\)](#)*

*[Spanish Moss - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences \(ufl.edu\)](#)*

*[Resurrection Fern | National Wildlife Federation \(nwf.org\)](#)*

*[Manage Forests and Land | Ball Moss: FAQs TFS \(tamu.edu\)](#)*

*[Spanish Moss, Lichens & Slime Molds | Home & Garden Information Center \(clemsn.edu\)](#)*