

Pruning frost damaged plant material:

The best course of action for ornamental plant recovery is to wait for warmer conditions to return. Severe pruning should be delayed until new growth appears. If possible, wait until leaves fall naturally if the appearance factor is not critical. ValleyCrest will be removing the frost damage on the ornamentals during the appropriate time frames.

Refrain from pruning ornamentals until we are certain the threat of frost is over. I know your next question will be regarding the exact date. Well, we need to be somewhat flexible. Most experts agree the threat of frost is over in Florida sometime in middle March. I know it is difficult to see the landscape looking so poorly but it will not take long before things are green and blooming again.

Before pruning back plant material, be sure to make the cut into live wood.

Do not remove living plant parts that contain stored up food reserves.

Remember that pruning scars will only heal if the cuts are made into living tissue.

Cold injury may appear as a lack of spring bud break on a portion of or all of the plant. Some may show an overall weak appearance. The outer branch tips may be damaged, while older wood can be free of injury.

The "line" between dead and live wood will eventually be "marked" by the growth of a new bud. If you are still not sure, a small scrape of the bark with a sharp knife will show either a green or darkened growth layer. Cold-injured cambium layers under the bark will be black or brown in color and live tissue is green. Prune these branches behind this point of discoloration.

Thank you,

John Cornelius  
ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance  
Branch Manager