



LAKEWOLD GARDENS

An Inspirational Experience

Winter Plant Insulation

Plants that are stressed as a cold spell approaches will be less protected than those that are healthy. As an example, even during this rainy time of the year, a water stressed plant will suffer cold damage much more readily than that of a well-watered plant.

While this does not mean that you should go out and turn on your irrigation this winter, you should allow for once per month watering on your most vulnerable plants.

The science behind this is that water acts as an insulator, so that plant cells that are well saturated will be stronger against cold damage. Cold, winter air can be drying. A cold wind can move water away from the plant faster than it can absorb it and this is especially true for evergreens, because they still actively photosynthesize during the winter months. My advice is to have all your

plants well watered as winter approaches, especially your containerized plants, evergreen trees and shrubs, plants under eaves, porches, and in the rain shadow of large trees.

Our occasional winter snow can act as a layer of insulation over your plants. Any given volume of snow can be up to 99% air, and like a down comforter, the trapped air serves to cover the ground keeping it from freezing or at least raising the temperature slightly above that of the air above the snow. The moisture from the snow soaks into the ground thus holding heat more efficiently and retarding frost penetration.

Finally – mulch: one of the best insulators for your plants. A combination of a well watered and mulched plant, with a valuable snow cover, will be the safest winter protection around.