

Act Now On Palms to Reduce Damage from Winter Weather

North Texas has had some abnormally cold and wintry weather in January and February 2010, from a 13 degree freeze to mid-February's absolute record snowfall for our area. As soon as the ice and snow have cleared enough to do so, you should do a few things to ensure the health of your palms.

Don't worry about the burned foliage yet - take it off once we warm up toward spring. Drench the heart areas of all palms with a gallon or two of our ferti-lome Systemic Fungicide to prevent crown rot, a dangerous condition for a palm that causes the inner heart of the palm to wither, die, and rot in a period of a few months, brought on by serious frost damage. Make sure to keep plenty of frost cloth on hand to wrap palms for the very severe weather like we've had recently - you won't need to wrap or cover palms very often, but when you need to, it will make a dramatic difference in the plant's appearance and health. Fertilize your palms this April with our Carl Pool Palm Food, and they'll put on a good flush of growth.

For our organic customers - we don't have a definitive control for crown rot that we can point to and assure you that "This will work". Our best suggestions would be either horticultural corn meal as a tea (let steep for several hours), or potassium bicarbonate spray. Both of these materials act as contact fungicides. Work more horticultural corn meal around the root systems of your palms, as well. Feed palms organically with our 5-2-4 Nature's Guide fertilizer and Espoma Epsom Plus for their April feeding.

We've had many reports from our customers and neighbors of palms (especially sago palms) with moderate to severe cold damage this winter. The good news: most of the "dead" looking palms will look much better once they've put on new growth, but you'll need to be patient and wait until June 15th to see if new growth emerges. Dunk them with the fungicide, and simply wait. Most of the palms will be fine.