



THE HARLOW HELPER

CITRUS RECOVERY STRATEGY

Don't panic!

Citrus are amazingly resilient and will recover fairly fast if treated correctly.

- Because even dead leaves, twigs, and branches can protect your tree's bark from cold and sun damage, we do not recommend removing dead twigs, branches or leaves until all danger of frost is over. **The average date of the last killing frost in Tucson is March 15.** However, we have had snow as late as Easter. So, you have to look into your crystal ball to decide when frosty nights are gone for good.
- **Watch for new growth.** This will help you determine which parts of the tree are dead. The dead twigs/branches may be removed when it is time to prune.
- **Protect trunk, limbs, and branches from sun burn.** After dead leaves, twigs, and branches have been removed, **wrap or paint the trunk and major branches.** Once the tree has leafed out, some of the wrapping may be removed. Leave wrap on trunk until new leaves fully shade the trunk and major branches.
- **Nourish the tree with El Toro Citrus Food or similar product in mid-February.** Cover with a layer of compost up to 3" deep (not in contact with trunk) over root system. Always water your tree before and after fertilizer applications. Apply fertilizer again in mid-May and late August as usual.
- **Because your leaf canopy will be modest for several months, consider regular applications of B.T. (Bacillus thuringiensis) beginning in late March to prevent caterpillars from further reducing the leaf canopy.**
- **Water deeply and thoroughly, but less frequently until new foliage is present.** The soil should be kept moist (not wet!); *trees with no foliage will not be transpiring as much water and will need watering less frequently.* However, the duration should remain the same. It is always a good idea to check the soil before watering: It is time to water if the surface feels slightly dry to the touch; or, if using a soil probe, the core sample extracted is moist. If the core sample is dry watering frequency needs to be increased.

Do what you can to cover any tender new growth that emerges between now and any more frosty nights. New growth is more susceptible to cold damage. Pay attention to weather forecasts and don't take any chances.

The silver lining to all of this unusual cold weather is: We will have far fewer pests, like aphids, thrips, and even caterpillars, this spring. Yay!