

RIGHT PLANT, RIGHT PLACE... FOR WINTER

How to pick plants for minimal maintenance and year-round looks!

Regionally native and adapted plants are the best line of defense against landscape damage from sporadic, unpredictable freezing temperatures in Texas. A properly selected native and adapted plant palette will be naturally cold hardy to your region.

These species thrive in their native climates, resisting damage from most of the typical conditions therein, including hard freeze. Native and adapted plants come in a wildly expansive range of shapes, colors, and textures. They should comprise the heavy majority of plant material in your landscape.

Many deciduous varieties are lush and vibrant, with flowers that bloom throughout the growing season, before they enter dormancy for fall and winter. Meanwhile, evergreen or semi-evergreen native and adapted plants can

provide vibrant color throughout fall and winter and into early spring, as deciduous plants are still dormant or producing new growth.

Pick native and adapted plants that are cold hardy to your region, or hardiness zone. Most established cold hardy plants do not need special care under their zone's normal winter weather conditions. The hardiness zone map below shows the average coldest temperature for each zone in Texas over the past 30 years. The zones are broken up into 5-degree increments, cooling and warming from north to south.

Find your plant's cold hardiness attributes on its tag or seed packet; search "AgriLife plant guide" online for a vast network of plant resources.

WATERING WHEN FREEZING

Moisture in the soil can help the soil to retain heat, but **avoid moisture on plant leaves and stems.** Sufficient water inside plant cells can make a specimen more resilient to frost damage, but excess moisture on the outside can contribute to damage as water freezes.



DO:

- Make sure the soil, and **only** the soil, is moist when freezing temperatures are expected.
- Water **only** when temperatures rise above 45 degrees or higher the day before a freeze.
- Pay special attention to newly planted and frost sensitive plants.
- Turn your irrigation controller or timer to **off** when expecting a freeze.

DON'T:

- Allow excess water or condensation on plant leaves or stems.
- **Over-water!** Once or twice a month during winter should suffice for most plants.
- Irrigate late in the day when plants are less likely to absorb water.
- Water when sufficient moisture is present after rain, snow, or sleet events.
- Cause accidents on roads and walkways with ice from sprinkler spillover.

HARDINESS ZONE AND AVERAGE LOW TEMPERATURE FARENHEIT



Pick plants that are native or adapted to the hardiness zones where they will be planted. A plant in the right hardiness zone has the best climate for not only surviving, but thriving with little or no maintenance.

*Map adapted from USDA Hardiness Zone map.

DEFINING THE RIGHT PLANT FOR YOU

Perennials are plants expected to live 3 years or longer. "Deciduous" varieties regrow after winter dormancy; "evergreen" varieties grow all year. Each requires little maintenance when grown in the proper hardiness zone.

Borderline cold-hardy plants, or short-lived perennials, are plants that are less than well-adapted to the zones where they are planted. A range of temperature and exposure conditions determine whether these specimens regrow after winter.

Annuals are planted each year in spring and summer, some in fall. They are sensitive to frost and cannot survive hard freezes. Time, work, and resources increase to maintain health and vigor in annuals. Plant them in containers when possible; move them to protected areas during frost and freeze events.

COOL TIP:

Plant cold-sensitive plants, including vegetables, on a south facing windbreak or building wall for extra protection from northern winter winds. Old sheets can help hold soil heat temporarily in freezing temperatures around 32 degrees Fahrenheit, which produce frost. Remove sheets when temperatures rise above freezing. A 4-inch layer of mulch can also help boost frost protection in the landscape.

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