

## Jan-March

The winter months are typically a dry time of the year in Florida. In addition there is also a possibility of extreme changes in temperatures. It is not uncommon to see relatively warm weather change over night to below freezing. Many of our lawn and landscapes are susceptible to freeze damage when this occurs. To help reduce the potential for freeze damage you should make sure that you are still providing adequate moisture to the landscape. A lawn or landscape that is dry or under drought stress during a freeze will stand a greater chance for injury than one that is properly watered.

If you have a warning of an overnight freeze check in advance to see if the lawn or landscape is dry and run the irrigation cycle if necessary to reduce the chances of freeze damage. Also if there is indeed an overnight freeze, you should avoid walking across the lawn in the morning or mowing the lawn for a few days to reduce the chances of additional injury.

March will typically herald the return of spring. Azaleas will be in full bloom and new growth will begin to emerge on many of our landscape plants. As soon as the azaleas finish blooming it will be time to prune the tips of these plants to help thicken them up and create a foundation for the new season's growth. It is also a good time of the year to clean up the landscape beds to get rid of weeds and replenish the mulch. Rake up debris and clean out the accumulated mulch and leaf litter from around the base of your plants. Set the layer of mulch at about 2 inches throughout the bed but be sure to leave the bark of the trunks exposed to prevent rot from occurring.