

FROST DAMAGE: FICUS TREES

The Dreaded Freeze

When cold air fronts move through the Southwest, temperatures plummet and frost sneaks up on many of our sensitive plants and trees. Ficus trees are no exception. Many smaller Ficus trees may be lost all together and, unless particularly protected, significant portions of the larger trees may be severely damaged due to hard frosts.

While it is hard to be patient, it is best to wait to see if new growth will come back. By the middle of May it will be evident if any new growth has emerged. If it has, it is generally found at the center and lower portions of the tree.



What To Do With Ficus Trees?

What can be done with a partially green Ficus tree? You can prune the tree by cutting just above the last buds. This process may take out the majority of the original

tree but with continued corrective pruning and time the tree may, barring additional hard frosts, recover to an acceptable level. Depending on the original size of the tree and the amount of damage, the right decision may be to remove it. Hiring a Certified Arborist to properly evaluate and perform the work is recommended. A list of arborists can be found by visiting:

www.treecareindustry.org/index.aspx

To Prune Or Not To Prune

It's difficult to look at your half green Ficus tree knowing that it used to be full, healthy and beautifully green. Unfortunately, your tree will never be the same no matter what you decide to do. If you decide to prune the dead tissue, it will take years before it grows to its original size. If you decide to leave it, the green will eventually fill in, but you'll be looking at brown dead tissue for several years.

