



## 2024 INS and OUTS

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#### INS:

- Taking a soil test to determine fertility needs for the spring
- Planning for spring planting

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- Watering your yard prior to a freeze event
- Applying pre-emergent in beds & turf in February, May, and September to help with weed prevention
- Checking your irrigation system yearly to ensure it is operating effectively
- Attending your bi-annual HOA Landscape Seminar with Dr. Moon + Associates
- Enjoying the outdoors
- Applying Neem Oil for overwintering insects & diseases Using a systemic insecticide such as
- Merit for season long control of bores & scales

#### **OUTS:**

- Leaving your sprinklers on when it's below 32°
- **Committing Crape Murder**
- Planting trees in the heat of the summer
- Using weed & feed combined

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- Not being nice to your neighbors Applying fertilizer without a soil test Treating for insects & diseases when you only have a few leaves involved Planting a plant that is out of your
- planting zone
- Creating mulch volcanoes around trees and in beds
- Not removing stakes from trees that are rooted

## Winter Pest Control

#### **By Jennifer Hall**

Most of us do not consider controlling insects, mites, and diseases in our plants during winter. But now is an excellent time to reduce those overwintering pests and diseases for next spring and summer.

Be sure to clean up leaves and other debris from your yard. This debris provides a perfect place for pests to overwinter. Also, be aware of stacked firewood in your yard. It is another overwintering site for pests.

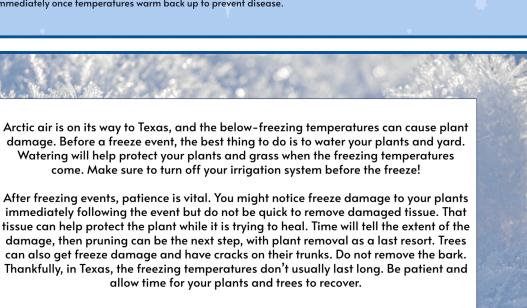
Neem Oil is an excellent organic control for these overwintering insects, mites, and some diseases. Treat all your trees, shrubs, ground cover, and perennials by spraying thoroughly. Spray several days before an expected rain event and when temperatures exceed freezing. Apply at rates given on the label instructions. It is safe to use on fruits and vegetables until the day of harvest. This preventative treatment will benefit you by reducing insect and disease problems during the spring and summer.

# Prepping your Landscape for Arctic Cold!

In Texas, when temperatures fall below freezing for an extended period, the temperatures can damage tender plants that have not acclimated to the brutal cold. The best protection for these plants is to keep them from being dry going into this type of weather.

Recent rains may not supply an adequate amount of water. Provide extra water to all trees, shrubs, ground cover, vines, perennials, ornamental grasses, annual color, and turf (lawns). Additional watering is especially needed on all new plantings since they have a limited root system before cold weather arrives. All plants still use water in the winter. **Hydrated plants survive cold weather better because they have frost protection.** Water releases heat slower than plant tissue, protecting plants from the cold. Moisture in the soil also traps heat and gives off heat to plants to stay warmer for a few days. This simple task can make all the difference in plant survival.

Water early and do not water after the cold arrives. **Make sure irrigation systems are off during freezing weather!** During an extended freeze, you can also cover plants for extra protection. Use a fabric material, not plastic, if possible or affordable. Remove materials immediately once temperatures warm back up to prevent disease.



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#### ~FREEZE DAMAGE~



# **Mistletoe Kiss or Curse**

By Dr. Louie Gradilla

Christmas may have passed, but mistletoe could still be hanging around in your trees- when we think of mistletoe, most of us have a romantic notion of Christmas and kissing, but mistletoe is a parasitic plant that can harm your trees.

#### How does mistletoe spread in trees?

Birds love consuming the berries from mistletoe. Then, as they move from tree to tree, they spread mistletoe through their droppings.

### How is mistletoe harmful to trees?

Because mistletoe is parasitic, it takes necessary water and nutrients from the tree. This infection weakens the tree, making it susceptible to other harmful diseases and parasites.

### What do you do if your tree has mistletoe?

The most effective way to control mistletoe and prevent its spread is to prune out infested branches immediately. Pruning out limbs is an acceptable technique when dealing with smaller limbs. However, if the mistletoe grows on a more significant branch, cut out the mistletoe and wrap the cut site with duct tape to maintain the tree canopy shape.

Let's keep the Christmas tradition of mistletoe hanging above a romantic Christmas kiss but out of our trees.

January 2024 Issue of Gardening by the Moon