



DR. R.E. MOON +
ASSOCIATES
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Gardening by the Moon

February 2025 HOA Newsletter



Shadow Creek HOA
Landscape Seminar
with Dr. Moon

Thursday, February 13th
Emerald Bay Clubhouse @ 7 PM

Effects of Freezing Temperatures on Plant Material

Is your landscape looking sad? Despite the freezing temperatures, it's important to remember that plants are remarkably resilient.

You might be observing some of the following symptoms in plants:

- **Live Oak Trees**—In early spring, the leaves will turn grayish brown and fall off the tree earlier than usual. This is not a problem for these trees, which drop leaves annually. Fertilize them this month.
- **Dormant Trees**— such as Red Oak, Bur Oak, Chinese Pistache, Lacebark Elm, Cedar Elm, and ash, should not be damaged since most had already gone dormant before freezing temperatures. Fertilize these trees this month.

- **Narrow-Leaved Evergreen Trees**—Conifers, Eastern Red Cedar, Juniper, and Pine trees will turn reddish from the cold. These plants will have extra needle drops now and in the spring. Do not be concerned about the reddish color. It will go away in the spring with new growth, and there should be no permanent damage. Fertilize these trees this month.
- **Broadleaf Evergreens**—Holly, Ligustrum, Magnolia, and other broadleaf trees can have brown spots on their leaves or brown leaves caused by the freeze. These leaves will drop off in the spring, and new buds will replace old ones. Some pruning may be required, but wait until spring to do this pruning. These plants should recover. Fertilize these trees this month.
- **Palm Trees**—Some palm trees may have burned fronds that must be removed, but most will recover from this freeze next summer. Fertilize these trees this month.
- **Shrubs**—Shrubs such as holly, boxwood, ligustrum, etc., can have brown spots on their leaves and yellowing or browning caused by the freeze. These plants should recover. The leaves will drop off in the spring, and new buds will replace old ones. Some pruning may be required, but wait until spring to do this pruning. Fertilize in March to improve vigor.
- **Plants with Underground Rhizomes and Spreading Roots**—Dianella, Liriope, Ginger, Foxtail Fern, etc.- will have burned leaves. However, these plants will survive. Cut them back to the ground now or in March. Fertilize them in March to improve their vigor.
- **Ground Cover**—Asian Jasmine, Colorata Euonymus, Honeysuckle, and other ground covers will have burned yellow-brown leaves. These leaves will drop off, and new leaves will emerge in the spring. Fertilize in March to improve vigor.
- **Ornamental Grasses**—These grasses should have minor damage since they were dormant. Cut them back and fertilize them in March.
- **Perennials**—These plants will have burned leaves, cut back in March.
- **Outdoor Tropicals**—Plants like philodendrons will have brown leaves that can look water-soaked. Monitor these plants for recovery. If recovery is not achieved, replace them in the spring.
- **Annual Color**—If the color looks water-soaked, it will not recover and must be replaced. However, if the color has brown leaves, it can recover by spring.
- **Cool-Season Turf**—Ryegrass and Fescuegrass will turn yellow and brown but recover rapidly from cold events. Fertilize to encourage new growth.

- **Warm-Season Turf**– If St. Augustinegrass was not completely dormant before the freeze, it may have some damage but will recover in the spring. Since Bermudagrass was going dormant, it should have no permanent damage. Fertilize in the spring to encourage new growth. Lower the mowing height before fertilizing.

Remember, nature has a way of bouncing back. Be patient and give your plants the time they need to recover. Plus, be prepared; we could always have another freeze in February.

Date	Landscape Maintenance Tasks for February
Feb. 1st	Set the irrigation timer to run once every two weeks this month. However, with all the rain and freezing temperatures, you want to leave the controller off during these times.
Feb. 4th	Cut dead tissue from trees and plants– refer to the article above for how and when.
Feb. 5th	<p>Mow your turf short and dethatch (if required) to prepare your turf for pre-emergent and fertilizer.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cut your grass shorter now- reducing the mowing height so the dormant turf is cut short encourages the grass to green up quicker in the spring. 2. If the soil surface has a thick thatch layer, rent a vertical cutting machine or hire someone to remove it. This will make your turf healthier. 3. Aerate and apply a pre-emergent weed control after dethatching. 4. Remember, proper care is key. Fertilize your turf in March. With the right care, you will see healthy, vigorous turf all summer, a testament to the resilience of your plants.
Feb. 11th	Aerate turf before application of pre-emergent and fertilizer.
Feb. 14th	Celebrate Valentine’s Day with a beautiful flower bouquet. Roses are always a fine choice, but you can also try something new: tulips, orchids, sunflowers, peonies, or lilies.
Feb. 18th	When applying pre-emergent weed control, always follow the label directions to ensure you use the right amount for effective and safe control. We recommend <i>Preen Weed Preventer</i> for beds and <i>Scotts Halts Crabgrass and Grassy Weed Preventer</i> for turf.

Feb. 25th	Fertilize trees this month with $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of slow-release turf fertilizer per inch of tree trunk diameter. Spread the fertilizer evenly from the trunk past the tree's drip line. The rest of your landscape fertilizing will take place in March.
Feb. 28th	Now is the time to start planning your spring color scheme for warmer temperatures. Choose the colors and locations of your new plantings around the home. Consider how much sun and shade the flowers will receive to pick the right color for the best spots in your yard.

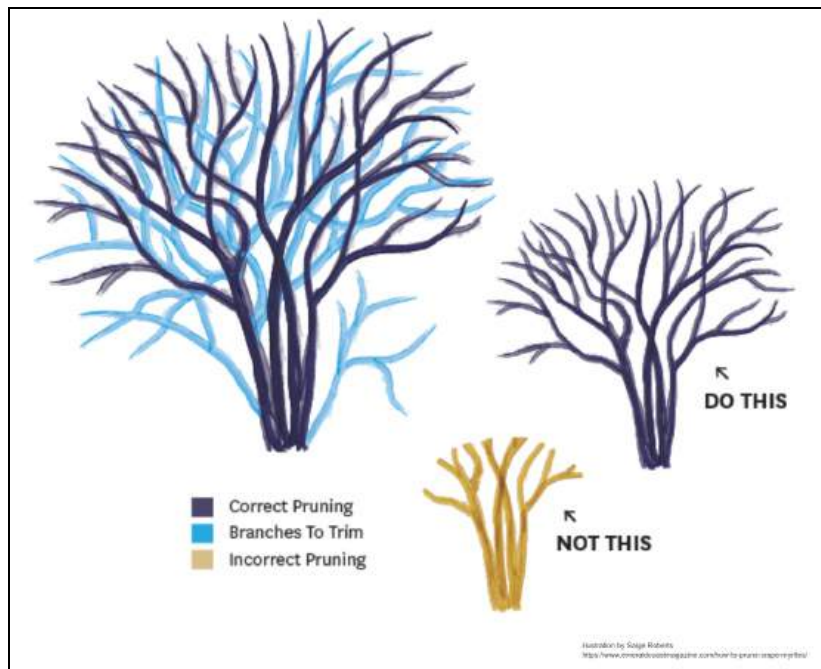
Correctly Pruning Crape Myrtles to Avoid Crape “Murder”

Crape myrtle trees are the darling plant of the south. They flower most of the summer, providing long-lasting white, pink, red, or purple blooms. Some varieties are determinate and will grow only 6 to 8 feet in height; some types are dwarf and plant as shrubs, and where there is room for height, some varieties will soar to 25 or 30 feet.

In many instances, homeowners limit crape myrtles' natural beauty by performing crape "murder." This is when you cut the tree back from the top, leaving stubs, consequently shortening the life of your tree. Crape myrtles are best grown as trees, and you should prune them as trees. **Winter is the best time to prune crape myrtles, and understanding this will help you maintain the health and beauty of your trees.**

Follow these guidelines when pruning crape myrtles:

- Remove low-hanging branches that interfere with walkways.
- Remove broken and dead branches.
- Remove crossover or rubbing branches.
- Remove sucker growth off the base of the trunk or on the trunk.
- Remove any branches growing into your home structure.
- You do not need to prune old seed heads; they will fall off naturally.



Additional Winter Tips for CM: Crape myrtles have overwintering insects and diseases you can control by spraying thoroughly until runoff with Neem Oil. This product is a safe, non-toxic pesticide for your garden and landscape that is also friendly to the environment and still effective. Neem Oil is your friend and an excellent answer to all these concerns, and you can use it on all trees, shrubs, ground cover, and even in your garden. It means you can keep only one product in your garage for control of most insects, some diseases, and mites.

Bayer Tree and Shrub Granular plant food and insecticide can also control scale and aphids. Daconil can prevent powdery mildew and sooty mold.

The beauty of crape myrtles makes pruning them correctly and controlling insects and diseases during the winter worthwhile. They will enhance your landscape and offer beautiful colors throughout the summer.