**Calvin Finch PhD**

**Horticulturist and Director**

**Texas A&M Water Conservation and Technology Center**

**“Citrus Pruning After Severe Cold”**

Many trees, especially lemons and limes, lost their leaves in the series of freezes that we experienced in Central Texas. Citrus are cold sensitive to differing degrees and the damage is also dependent on where they are in the landscape and if the trees were protected.

You can expect some stem and trunk damage but may not see how severe the damage was for a few months.

During the spring flush following a freeze, leaves on freeze-damaged limbs may grow but then will wilt soon after. After this wilt occurs on the spring flush, you will have a better idea about which limbs to prune.

Typically by early summer, any damage will be evident, and it is time to remove the dead branches by cutting back several inches into healthy, green wood. Protect the large limbs that are cut with diluted latex paint if the returning shoots are few. Typically, the regrowth is vigorous and paint will not be needed.

If one of your trees defoliated, it will probably survive, but you won’t be able to expect any fruit in 2014.

In addition to the wilt and dead foliage on damaged branches, several other freeze-damage results may be evident.

Loose split bark and oozing from the stem and trunk also indicates damage that may require pruning off of the wood below the wound.

It is also not unusual for some branch death to only occur after the hottest part of the summer when the damaged tree comes under serious stress.

Sometimes when a tree is weak, frozen back or broken off, a sucker or shoot will grow from the rootstock. The fruit from this rootstock shoot will usually be different than on the original tree. The tree may produce two kinds of fruit if a portion of the scion (top, desirable part of the tree) remains. Fruits from rootstocks may be sour orange, rough lemon, trifoliate orange, Carrizo citrange, Swingle citrumelo or other rootstocks. Large thorns are also common. Cut the sucker off to allow the desired variety to become dominant. Some selections such as ‘Orange Frost,’ ‘Artic Frost’ and ‘Bumper’ are propagated on their own roots so they will come back true to their type after a freeze. Some commercial nurseries, such as Greenleaf Nursery, propagate all of their citrus on the plant’s own roots, so they will come back true to type after a hard freeze. Greenleaf Nursery propagates Meyer Lemon, Mexican Lime, Calamondin, ‘Seto” Satsuma, ‘Miho’ Satsuma, ‘Okitsu’ Satsuma, ‘Kimbrough’ Satsuma, ‘Mr. Mac’ Satsuma, ‘Rio Red’ Grapefruit, ‘Meiwa’ (round) kumquat and ‘Navel’ orange.

**“Garden Tasks”**

Harvest the central broccoli heads, fertilize the plants and side heads will be produced.

Plant seeds of carrots, beets, radishes, sweet corn, turnips and English peas.

Live oak leaves will soon fall. Use them for mulch or in the compost pile.

Fertilize shade trees with 1 cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer per inch of diameter. Apply the fertilizer at the drip line.