

# The Big Freeze & The Facts About Trees

## Do Your Trees Look Dead?

If my memory serves me correctly the winter of 2000 provided us many nights of below freezing temperatures. Once again the Santa Ynez Valley has been hit by bitter freezing temperatures thus causing severe damage to both ground cover and trees. In the process it has made many types of trees and large shrubs to appear dead, which in some cases is true. The trees most hard hit by this are Eucalyptus, Camphor, Palm and Peppers. Ceanothus appears to be affected as well, but not as severely.

There will probably be a number of people who will tell you these trees and plants are dead. It has been my and the experience of Bruce Hagen the editor of Western Arborist Magazine, that this is not the case. I spoke with Bruce last week on this subject and our consensus is that about 80 to 90% of these trees will come back if given the proper amount of time. **DO NOT** trim these trees until new growth is abundantly present. If survival is to occur the trees will need an ample amount of time to re-generate. You should begin to see results by mid spring. New leaves should start to appear when temperatures begin to climb. If by late spring or early summer there is no sign of new growth there is a possibility the tree has died. Trimming trees prior to regeneration will surely cause severe damage.

Just because the tree looks dead doesn't mean it is. The leaf is very fragile and freezes very easily. The limb structure is not as easily damaged and in most cases will produce new leaves in the spring.

Do not let unknowledgeable people profit by removing a tree that is unsightly and looks dead when in reality it is very much alive. There are ways a professional can tell if a tree has a chance of responding. The leaf structure of a tree, while in a semi-dead looking state, will not necessarily show the true health of the tree. We at Santa Ynez Valley Tree Care can determine this for you, but waiting for spring will tell the same story.

Winter temperatures are an ideal time of year to prune all varieties of pine trees as the sap is flowing very slowly and is less likely to send out signals which will attract unwanted insects. Also this is the perfect time of year to prune fruit trees.

If you have any questions please contact Santa Ynez Valley Tree Care at (805) 688-5580 for all your tree care needs.

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