

FROST DAMAGE IN VEGETABLES AND LANDSCAPE PLANTS

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Most Vermont gardeners realize warm season vegetable crops like peppers, corn, tomatoes, basil and cucumbers aren't safe in the garden until May 31. Luckily, this saved a lot of vegetables from the frost and freeze damage we had on May 18 around the state. If you did have some of the warm season crops planted, they are likely to have been killed and would need to be replanted. Some of the more cold-tolerant crops that may have been in the garden during the cold snap are showing signs of damage. I have seen a fair amount of dieback of tips in onions and cold damage on brassica crops. Since the roots are well insulated by the soil, these plants will not die even though the damaged leaves may die and drop. Just watch the new growth of the plant and as long as it is emerging green and healthy, the plant should recover just fine and provide you with a good harvest later in the season.



Frost damage on smokebush. A. Hazelrigg

There has been a lot of coverage of the devastating losses to our apple and grape crops around the state. Data is currently being compiled now to assess the impact and breadth of the damage. Although not economically important, our landscapes ornamental trees also were impacted by the low temperatures. Typically, the new succulent growth of trees and shrubs are more vulnerable to the lower temperatures so you may see blackening of leaves, dieback in branch tips and in wilting in the new growth in conifers. It is very hit and miss throughout the state and even site to site. I have seen leaf damage on birches and chestnuts, yet the crabapples, maples and oaks are fine in the same area. It just depends on the species of tree involved, the stage of growth and the microclimate. The good news is most trees and shrubs if damaged early enough in the season, will produce new buds and grow just fine.

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