



DARRIN'S COOL WEATHER TIPS FOR FALL 2020

1. Review Irrigation Schedules. It's been a record season for high water usage just to keep trees and plants alive. Now it's time to adjust watering frequency and duration. You may have been watering every day, even twice a day, but it's probably safe now to go to every other day and to begin watering a bit earlier in the day since we are not heating up so much in the late afternoon.

2. Tree, Shrub and Plant Pruning and Shaping. Major tree work and shrub shaping can be done now, in cooler weather, as it is less stressful for the tree or shrub to recover. Large branches or errant growth can be removed or corrected.

* Most citrus trees have had a tough summer, so look now at their structure. Curling and stressed leaves that grew in the summer can be removed. Remove suckers, especially from the lower main trunk and root stock. If there are large "leaders" separating from the canopy they can be removed back to the main trunk.

* As mesquites, acacias, ironwoods and palo verdes drop their leaves, you can more easily observe troublesome growth, such as crossing branches that rub each other, mistletoe, witch's broom, etc. Now is the time to remove them, but retain the tree's natural symmetry and characteristics as much as you can.

* Birds of Paradise can be cut this time of year. If you cut them now, they will generate new growth that is cold-acclimated, and you will have a green plant, rather than dry sticks, to look at over the winter. If they do freeze, trimming the fall growth is easy.

* Similarly, you can cut back your lantana once they go to seed. They can be stimulated to flower again by trimming them back beyond the spent flowers and seeds.

3. Fertilizing. Due to lack of rainfall and extreme heat, we have had to rely on tap water for irrigation. Tap water lacks rainwater's ability to recharge the ground with its natural "live" solution to nurture the landscape. So, this is typically a time to consider fertilizing, but generally not for citrus trees and non-

natives that are cold-sensitive. This year, however, the reliance on tap water for citrus trees over the summer may have caused them to become “chlorotic” -- more chartreuse than green due to iron deficiency. You can address this deficiency without generating new growth that would be sensitive to a possible freeze by using a cocktail of a liquid iron solution and a few drops per gallon of liquid *Superthrive*. Also, if you did not put mulch down in your citrus tree wells to help insulate them from the heat, you can add mulch now to protect them from the coming cold.

4. Disease and insects. Check your trees for woodpecker holes along branches and trunks. There are a few products available that can help. Acecap Tree implant cartridges work well. They can be inserted into tree trunks and large branches to take care of borers and beetles systemically. Also look for fissures or boils in bark, which could be fungus or sooty canker. The University of Arizona offers advice on sooty canker:

<https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1032.pdf>

* Pyracantha has had a tough time this summer with a lack of rain, excessive heat and Fireblight, a malady that can kill mature Pyracantha if not managed or eradicated. Prune out affected areas, remove dead and burned branches, and apply a liquid disease control product to leaves and soil at regular intervals to keep the Fireblight in check. Apply the product early in the day or in the late afternoon, so that it does not evaporate too quickly. This University of California article may be helpful: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7414.html>.

* Bougainvillea, Crepe Myrtle, Pyracantha and many others are battling with spider mites and aphids which chew and disfigure new growth as it forms, ruining the look of the plant and disrupting flower production. You can research the products available to fight these pests. Some are easy to apply through your hose.

Love to your Landscapes,

Darrin

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