

FACT SHEET: Buy What Survived

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FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™ AGENT

How many of your favorite plants did not make it through last winter (2nd coldest since I have lived in Florida)? And, what were those plants? They were probably tropical plants installed in the ground and not suited for our zone, which is 9a. Or, they could have been plants suited for our zone but not the right plant in the right place. Micro-climates exist in our landscapes, so one plant may survive in a certain place, and in another location the same type plant will not. A micro-climate is a small area that differs from the surrounding area. This small area can vary in temperature and moisture.

I've been told about and witnessed the demise of several tropical plants in Hillsborough County that are suited for more temperate zones than ours: Poinciana, Mussaenda, Christmas Palm and Jacaranda.

What can you do to increase the number of surviving plants? Here are a few tips:

1. Buy what survived.
2. Repeat your successes.
3. Do not repeat your failures.
4. If you must have tropicals suited for warmer zones, plant them in a pot placed on a plant coaster with wheels so you can move them inside more easily. Or grow tropicals on your lanai or front porch in pots and move them closer to the house in colder weather. Virginia Overstreet, Master Gardener, provides this advice: "If you have mature trees, plant your tropicals under them. Many tropicals are understory plants and will enjoy the protection from frost damage (and harsh summer sun) these trees can provide."
5. Can't live without orchids? Buy a hanging clothes rack or garden beverage type cart with shelves and wheels, then wheel them inside.
6. Divide and share surviving plants with your friends and they with you.
7. Order your own personal copy of The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Guide to Plant Selection & Landscape Design at the Southwest Florida Water Management District's website if you are in their district or you can view it on-line regardless of what Water Management District you live in:
<http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/publications/subject/landscaping>. This is a great resource you will use time and time again to select appropriate plants for our zone.



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For horticultural assistance, contact the Hillsborough County Extension Office, 744-5519, or visit us at 5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584. Master Gardeners are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. We can help!