

FACT SHEET: Time to Replace Winter Kill (in the spring after the last chance of frost)

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Winter most certainly had an impact on our landscapes. Many consider the impact a negative one. I consider it a great opportunity to re-evaluate landscape choices. Stroll through your yard and make a mental note of the plants that survived the winter and are thriving now. Consider repeating these plants in other locations in your landscape. Also note the plants that didn't survive which may not survive another winter if it's as extreme as this one.

It's decision-making time. If you repeat your successes by replacing plants that didn't survive with those that did and with other more cold tolerant plants, you can save yourself time, money and ruminations about the plants you loved and lost.

If your hibiscus or powderpuff plant bit the dust, consider these shrubs: beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) and golden dewdrop (*Duranta repens*). Beautyberry has a 4 to 8-foot spread, moderate growth rate and shiny purple berries with lilac flowers from spring to fall. Golden dewdrop has a 6 to 10-foot spread, needs full sun to partial shade, blooms from spring to fall and attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.

If you lost poinsettias or crotons, alternatives include perennial plants that reseed themselves: whirling butterfly (*Gaura*) and tickseed (*Coreopsis*), which is Florida's state wildflower. Whirling butterfly has a 2 to 3-foot spread, needs full sun to partial shade and has pink/white flowers from spring to fall. Tickseed has a 1 to 3-foot spread, needs medium to full sun and attracts butterflies and birds.

Additional key gardening tips include: group your plants by water needs; use 2-3 inches of mulch for weed suppression, moisture retention and to regulate soil temperature; water newly planted plants regularly until a good root system is established; know the watering restrictions for your area; use time release fertilizer; and buy plants that thrive in our hardiness zone, which is 9A.



Golden dewdrop



Beautyberry



coreopsis



whirling butterfly

More gardening information is available at: <http://hillsborough.extension.ufl.edu> and <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>. 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!