

## *JPA Landscape & Construction, Inc.*



This month we would like to touch on taking care of your landscape in these freezing temperatures. For the plant of the month we have chosen the Poinsettia due to their prominence everywhere. To get some quick business out of the way, we would like to highlight a few reminders. JPA will be available to remove Christmas trees from throughout properties we service beginning in January. I would like to give one last shout out to rebates for our current clients to take advantage of them and to ask if you are unclear as to what they are.

### **Winter is Coming!**

Temperatures start dropping in the San Francisco bay area around October. The sharp drops usually do not come until late November. This season has been right on track with this pattern. Along with it comes the holiday cheer and then the longer lasting condition of winter. Your landscape is slowing down and much of it is going into hibernation. There is some important information to keep in mind and better equip your landscape to endure the harsh weather.

#### The Bad:

1. **Frost Bite** - Some plants just aren't built to withstand the weather. Frost is created by water vapor on the ground that condenses and freezes when temperatures dip below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. The water inside the plant leaves also freezes causing damage to the cell and, therein, to the plant. When plants suffer from frostbite, the best thing that you can do, is leave them alone and let nature sort it out.
2. **Trimming** - Leaves may decline and the exterior of the plant may appear declined. Although it may seem unsightly, **DON'T TRIM OFF THE DEAD PORTIONS**. The plant is utilizing its declined leaves and limbs to protect the rest of it from cold damage. The removal of leaves, bark, or limbs can expose the plants to additional damage.
3. **Container Plants** - Container plants are more susceptible to cold damage due to the fact that their roots are more exposed as the cold temperatures have access from all sides rather than just from above. In order to protect this plant material, we recommend you bring them into a protected area, but be wary of temperature shock if you transfer them between drastically different temperatures. If bringing the plants inside is not an option, an alternative is to group the potted plants together on the south or west side of your home and cover them with a sheet. But don't forget to remove the sheet when the temperature rises above freezing to allow the plants access to the sun. As a seasonal solution, you can wrap the base of trees with traditional Christmas Lights, leaving them on at night.
4. **Fertilizer** - Do not fertilize your frost damaged plant material until it has put on some new

growth. The reason for this is that the nitrogen in the fertilizer will cause the plant to grow more quickly, and when a plant is recovering from frost bite, this is too quickly.

The Good:

1. **Dormant Plants** - Yes, some plants hibernate. You may look out at your front yard and think that shrub is dead, but it is merely sleeping, waiting for the kiss of warm weather to wake it up. It can be hard to tell whether a shrub is dormant or whether it is declined. First you want to establish whether it is of the type of plant that becomes dormant. If the plant does go dormant, then the question of whether it is declined or not should wait until warmer temperatures to be resolved. Replacing a declined dormant plant in the middle of winter is not recommended as the cold temperatures are not conducive to the plants growth.
2. **Mulch Away For Goodness Sake** - Mulch is used to keep moisture in the soil but it is also important for insulating the soil and protect plant roots; therein reducing heat loss and temperature fluctuations. Just think of it as a winter coat for your plants.

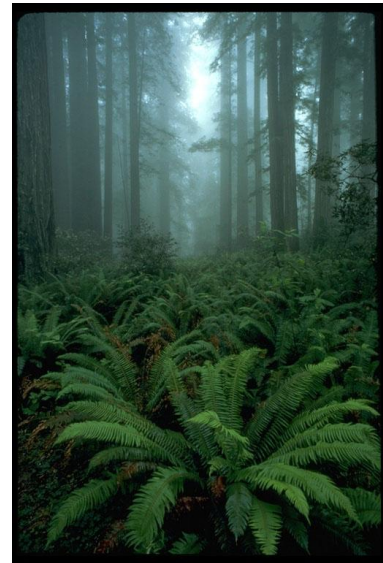
## Plant of the Month: Western Sword Fern

### *Polysticum munitum*

The Western Sword Fern is a California native that grows wildly most prominently along the coast.

It is ordained with evergreen leathery fronds that are attractive all year round. Growing from 3' to 6' in height and width, the Western Sword Fern is a low maintenance shrub that needs only a slight trim of the oldest fronds each spring. Its frost tolerance makes it the perfect plant for this month of December. In addition to its ability to endure cold temperatures, it is the perfect plant to assist in preventing soil erosion on hills. The roots of the fern create a maze that holds the soil in place through heavy rains. Lastly, the Western Sword Fern is popular for its adaptability. It does best with partial to full shade and soil with good drainage.

This robust and reliable shrub is perfect for keeping your landscape looking green during winter.



## This Month in Maintenance

**As growth is slowing down, our crews are focusing on cleaning up leaf debris from the landscape.**

Edge Monthly as Requested

Leaf Debris Clean Up

Mow Bi-Weekly as Requested