

# Dead or Alive?



In the winter months, some deciduous plants may appear to be dead because of their lack of leaves. If you are worried that any of your plants are dead, try the scratch test. Gently use your fingernail or knife to scrape the bark on a twig of the tree or the stem of the plant.

When the top layer is scratched off you will see one of two things. If you see a moist green interior, it is alive. If you see a brown or darkly colored interior that is brittle and dry, it is dead. Sometimes plants can be nursed back to health, but this takes time and is likely to be unsuccessful. During winter months: if you are ever unsure if a plant is dead or alive, it is best to wait until spring to see if it gets leaves. Even the latest plants to leaf out (like Crape Myrtles) typically have leaves by mid April.