

Cold weather

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If some plants do not fit indoors, James recommends keeping them safe in a garage, where temperatures are likely to be a few degrees warmer than outside. Otherwise, gardeners should cover their plants, making sure the sheet or other material used does not come into contact with the plant's leaves.

To prepare trees, shrubs and perennials to endure the cold, James recommends making sure they are well-watered before temperatures drop below freezing levels. Mulch can also help to keep the plants in good shape, she said.

Prevent your pipes from freezing

Pipe-freezing is an annual battle for Midwesterners this time of year. The concern grows as temperatures shrink for an extended period of time, said Kelly Laurie, a customer service employee and dispatcher at Holt Plumbing and Heating in West Des Moines.

Here are a few tips to prevent the mess — and cost — of frozen pipes:

- Leave a faucet slowly dripping to keep water flowing through the pipe. The water can be captured in a bucket and used for other purposes around the home, like watering plants and washing dishes.

- Open under-sink cabinets to allow warm air to circulate near your pipes.

- What if there's no water coming out of your faucets? Check your water meter. If water is leaking or spraying from your meter or the bottom is cracked, your water meter is frozen. Feel for frozen pipes. Pipes located along exterior walls are most susceptible to freezing. To thaw pipes, contact a licensed plumber or use hot towels or a hair dryer. Never use an open flame.

Make sure your car starts

Colder weather can often cause inconvenient and costly damage to your car. To avoid dead batteries and other problems with your vehicle, take the following precautions:

- Parking in a garage, whether heated or not, will keep your car warmer than parking it outside. Even a carport keeps a car several degrees warmer than one parked outside with no protection.

- Electric engine warming blankets can be easily fitted on top of your engine or on the inside of your car hood to keep your engine warm overnight, according to Lifewire.com. Other heaters include block heaters that bolt electrical elements to the exterior of the engine, oil heaters that take the place of a dipstick and coolant heaters to keep the antifreeze from, well, freezing.

- Keep jumper cables in your trunk.

- Batteries hate cold weather and produce less current, i.e. power, when temperatures plummet. If your car battery is more than three years old, have it checked out by a repair shop or auto-parts store to make sure it still holds a charge.

Keep your car on the road

If you have to drive on slick roads during an Iowa winter, here are tips on how to travel safely, courtesy of the Iowa Department of Transportation:

- Check the weather forecast and road conditions before driving.

- Maintain a reasonable speed and safe following distance from the vehicle in front of you. Winter road conditions often result in longer stopping distances and reduced visibility.

- Drive below the posted speed limit when road conditions are less than ideal.

- Turn on lights to see and be seen.

- Keep head lights and tail lights clear of snow.

- Avoid using cruise control in winter driving conditions.

- You need to be in control of your car when accelerating based on road conditions. If your car is equipped with anti-lock brakes, understand how to use them and what to expect when they are used.

- Be aware that ramps and bridges may freeze before other roadway segments.

Protect yourself from frostbite

To protect yourself against cold temperatures, the National Weather Service suggests wearing layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing with tightly woven and water repellant outer garments.

Make sure to trap in body heat with a hat and cover your mouth to protect your lungs from the bitter cold, NWS added.

To prevent frostbite, the Mayo Clinic recommends people do the following:

- Limit the time you're outdoors in cold, wet or windy weather.

- Dress in several layers of loose, warm clothing. Air trapped between the layers of clothing acts as insulation against the cold. Wear windproof and waterproof outer garments to protect against wind, snow and rain. Choose undergarments that wick moisture away from your skin. Change out of wet clothing, particularly gloves, hats and socks.

- Early signs of frostbite include red or pale skin, pricking, and numbness. Seek warm shelter immediately if you notice any of those indicators.

- When traveling in cold weather, carry emergency supplies and warm clothing in case you become stranded.

- Don't drink alcohol if you plan to be outdoors in cold weather. Alcoholic beverages cause your body to lose heat faster.

- Eat well-balanced meals, and stay hydrated. Doing this even before you go out in the cold will help you stay warm.

- Keep moving. Exercise can get the blood flowing and help you stay warm. But don't do it to the point of exhaustion.

Francesca Block is a breaking news reporter at the Des Moines Register. Reach her at FBlock@registermedia.com or on Twitter at @francesca_block3.

Debate

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Grassley rules out 15-week national abortion ban

The candidates disagreed about what to do about abortion in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court this summer overruling Roe v. Wade and eliminating the national right to an abortion.

Grassley ruled out voting for a federal bill introduced by U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham that would ban abortion after 15 weeks, with exceptions for rape or incest or to save the life of the pregnant person.

"I would vote no," he said.

Grassley has previously cosponsored another bill of Graham's that would ban abortion after 20 weeks, with those same exceptions. That bill was introduced in 2021, when Roe v. Wade was still in effect. Grassley said with Roe struck down, abortion is no longer a federal issue; it's a state issue.

He said the U.S. Supreme Court made the right decision in overturning Roe v. Wade, and decisions about restrictions on abortion should be made by elected representatives.

"Obviously it could be at the federal level, but we've been waiting for a long period of time to get this back to the states," Grassley said, "and that's where it should be and that's where I want it to be."

Franken has said he supports codifying Roe v. Wade into law. But when asked Thursday how such a bill should define viability, Franken said it shouldn't be a government decision.

"The short of it is during these most private times, personal times in a woman's life, we shouldn't have the government stepping in to determine when viability exists, etc.," he said. "The doctor knows this. The woman knows this. This is not something for government to step in and make those determinations."

Candidates spar over inflation, reducing costs

Both candidates criticized each other's position on inflation, while arguing they would work to reduce costs for Iowans.

Franken pointed to Grassley's vote against capping the price of insulin at \$35 for people on Medicare and said Grassley has taken donations from the pharmaceutical industry.

"We can do a lot as a senator (to reduce inflation), but it takes longstanding altruism and intellect to make it happen and not being a stooge for big corporations," Franken said.

Grassley said he has long worked to lower prescription drug prices, including working to enact Medicare Part D and partnering with U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., on his own prescription drug bill.

He said Democratic spending policies have increased inflation in the United States.

"When you're in a hole, you quit digging," he said. "But the Democrats are not quitting digging."

Candidates debate Jan. 6, peaceful transfer of power

Grassley talked about his support for changes to the Electoral Count Act of 1887 that would raise the threshold for members of Congress to object to electoral votes cast for the presidency and clarify that the vice president's role is purely ceremonial.

In 2020, former President Donald Trump pressured then-Vice President Mike Pence to interfere with the counting of electoral votes despite the fact that Pence had no authority to do so. The proposed law would make that lack of authority even clearer.

Asked if he would have declared Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 election had he been presiding over the joint session of Congress as president pro tempore in place of Pence, Grassley dismissed the question.

"That's not even a legitimate question because we are taking care of that issue right now by making sure in this legislation that I hope passes in November, December when we get back, that the vice president has got no discretion whatsoever," Grassley said. "His job is strictly ministerial. Just count the votes, nothing more."

Franken said Democrats have respected the results of presidential elections.

And he said Grassley hasn't done enough to stand up to elements in his own party who sympathize with the people who stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

"This country has never had this before, but when a party goes off the rail because of lack of leadership and this craven desire to stay in office, to stay in power, then we've got problems," Franken said.

Mike Franken responds to allegation of unwanted kiss

Franken also addressed allegations that he kissed a former campaign staffer on the mouth without her consent. The former staffer filed a report with the Des Moines Police Department in April, but the case was closed and no charges were filed.

"That matter was investigated and found to be unfounded," Franken said. "And you know, I'm a husband, two kids: girl, boy, wife of 33 years, 40-year history of zero tolerance of sexual malfeasance, sexual misdeeds or gender-related harassment."

Franken said Grassley "has a problem with women" because of Grassley's political stances such as his opposition to abortion.

"You're in no position to lecture me about women," Grassley replied. "You're in no position to do that."

Stephen Gruber-Miller covers the Iowa Statehouse and politics for the Register. He can be reached by email at sgrubermil@registermedia.com or by phone at 515-284-8169.

Football

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In the days following the team's 70-0 loss to Bondurant-Farrar on Sept. 30, Activities Director Katelyn Whelchel, head coach Bryce Pierce, high school Principal Dan Marburger and Wicks met to discuss what needed to be done to protect their student-athletes.

They discussed ideas to shorten games via abbreviated quarters. Running clocks, triggered when a team trails by 35 points, have been no stranger to the Bluejays the past few years. Four of the team's six losses this year were decided by more than 40 points.

Wicks said the district gathered input from parents who had contacted Pierce and also met with Dr. Clint Lutterman, the team's physical therapist. School leaders ultimately decided to forfeit the remainder of the season and sent a letter to staff and parents on Wednesday.

Whelchel said the district is dealing with immediate concerns — "We obviously need to talk about what to do to honor our seniors for senior night," she said — but is looking to bring back the program for the 2023 season.

District officials were unable to provide numbers for the start-of-season roster, players currently available, or a number that would have been deemed adequate to continue the team's season. Thirty-eight players are listed on the team's roster on the Varsity Bound website. For comparison, Friday's scheduled opponent, Norwalk, has 63 players listed.

Perry is forfeiting three varsity games, with Norwalk, Boone and Carlisle, but will continue to play "curtain raiser" games with the ninth and 10th

grade players, pending agreement from opponents.

Pierce, Perry's head coach since 2020, said Thursday that once the lower-level games are completed for the season, he and his coaching staff will gather "to discuss ways to encourage more kids in our school to play football to hopefully avoid this situation in the future."

Perry's team, community go from celebration to confusion

On Sept. 16, Perry players were literally jumping on each other to celebrate their 27-21 overtime victory against Des Moines Hoover, ending the team's five-year losing streak. Pierce said he and his staff had never been part of such an electric celebration. And that energy was felt in the hallways the following week, bringing positive vibes to team film sessions compared to watching game tape of another lopsided loss.

So to find out three weeks later that the team wouldn't have the chance to recapture that excitement came as a shock.

The news release sent out by the district on Wednesday said the decision "was made with the best information we have at the time while consulting coaches, the Iowa High School Athletic Association, future opponents, medical professionals and gathering input from concerned parents and students."

However, not every Perry parent feels that the district gathered enough input from families.

Steve Heck, father of senior quarterback Caden Heck, who suffered a major injury this season, said on Thursday that he learned of the season's cancellation on Wednesday through a news report rather than direct school communi-

cation. Steve Heck said he didn't think he and other parents were a significant part of the decision-making process. He also said student-athletes had advocated to continue playing this year.

"The last few days, (Coach) Pierce was staying in contact with all the seniors, letting them know what's going on," Heck said Thursday evening. "Then all of a sudden, it was like everything was worked out even with the (next opponent), I believe, to have a decent game with safety and consideration for our players. So I've got a lot of unanswered questions on my mind."

Heck added that his son was cleared by his surgeon on Tuesday to begin non-contact practice with pads, a sign of his potential to suit up again this season. Getting the news the following day that Perry would no longer play varsity games this year took Caden by surprise, his father said.

Heck said he is a big believer in Pierce and the potential he brings to the program, saying the coach is "probably the one to take this program to the next level."

Booster club members saddened, supportive of activities director

Perry booster club president Mindy Baxter said attendees shared a lot of sadness but also a lot of memories at Wednesday's booster club meeting.

I think right now we're just trying to process what happened

Perry booster club president Mindy Baxter

"I think right now we're just trying to process what happened," Baxter said Thursday.

And while the booster club understands that player safety comes first, Baxter said "our hearts just go out not

only to the seniors but all the football players."

"We understand the athletic department's decision and obviously we support (Activities Director) Katelyn Whelchel and what she does because that's what we're here for," she said of the booster club. "We're here to be a team."

The decision to cancel the remaining varsity games directly impacts the booster club's apparel sales. The Jay's Nest, next to the concession stand at Dewey Field, is open during Friday home football games.

"The majority of our sales happen in the fall, and Friday nights are huge for us," said booster club member Tiffany Olejniczak.

"So for us to lose two Friday nights is pretty significant. It just means that we're going to have to work harder to reach people."

The booster club plans to have apparel for sale during the elementary school conferences. Olejniczak and Baxter said the club also plans to have the Jay's Nest open for ninth and 10th grade games at Dewey Field.

Youth football program viewed as start to a brighter future

Program supporters voiced faith that Perry's varsity team can thrive thanks to a revitalized youth football league.

For a time, Perry did not have a youth league to help promote football and feed into the high school program. That left many current Bluejay players putting pads on for the first time as middle-schoolers, or even high-schoolers, leading to not only low roster numbers but also an inexperienced talent pool relative to their opponents.

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