

VCF WEATHER RP 1/6/89

# Cold snap blankets county with frost

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Frigid nights are expected during the weekend and motorists and gardeners are advised to take precautions.

Temperatures dropped to or below freezing throughout the county last night. The cold came on the heels of a brief rain, making conditions right for a thick frost this morning.

Local nurseries report having sold out of their frost-preven-

tion products. A pricey chemical spray that prevents frost formation on plants is in high demand, according to Kelly Gonzalez, manager at Ebert's in Santa Cruz.

Covering plants with burlaps or blankets and moving potted plants into garages or under overhangs are a few of the steps that can be taken to save plants from frost damage. Since afternoons are warm, however, Kelly said coverings must be removed and planters placed

back in the open during the days.

The frost is causing concern among only some in commercial agriculture. Flower growers find it a hardship, while apple growers say a cold snap is good.

Most row crops, such as lettuce and cauliflower, are not in the ground during this month in the Pajaro Valley. But in other growing areas of California and Mexico the frosts are causing some crop losses.

"Production has been shut down," said Laurie Matiasovich, of Brentwood Sales, a frozen-vegetable broker in Watsonville. "The shutdown may be bad for growers, but it's good for people on the market side because they can get a higher price for the decreased supply."

The freezing conditions on roadways complicated the morning commute, according to Highway Patrol officials. For the first time this season

Caltrans had to spread sand on mountainous roads and Highway 17.

More than a dozen accidents, including jack-knifed semi-trucks, along Highway 17 had northbound traffic backed up to the Scotts Valley city limits.

While well-traveled roads may shed their icy layers in a short while, the Highway Patrol warns that parking lots, road shoulders and meridians are hazardous areas.

This current cold snap may

also find homes hosting tribes of ants seeking warmth. Local pest-control companies say they are handling three times the normal amount of requests from customers who want to get rid of ant invasions.

"One way to prevent them from coming in is to practice extra good housekeeping," advises Howard Rackley of Hydrex. "They'll go away in a few days, as soon as it warms up. But some people aren't too

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tolerant of ants so they call us right away."

### RAINFALL

	Last 24 hrs	Season Total	Last Year
Felton .....	.13	20.50	17.90
Santa Cruz .....	.10	11.46	n.a
Soquel .....	.32	14.86	13.51
Aptos .....	.15	12.66	10.72
Freedom .....	.12	9.12	8.28
Corralitos .....	.09	12.02	9.85
Eureka Canyon ...	.17	17.70	13.54
Watsonville .....	.30	7.75	8.61
Aromas .....	.40	8.10	8.10
Pinto Lake .....	.20	12.45	11.85