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Freeze warnings in southern Wisconsin, northern Illinois might delay planting for farmers, gardeners

By Jacob Roushia Adams Publishing Group

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BELOIT

It's more than a month into spring, but that doesn't mean southern Wisconsin is finished with freeze warnings.

The National Weather Service issued multiple freeze warnings across southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois for Monday night and Tuesday morning. A freeze could lead gardeners and farmers to delay getting seeds and plants in the ground.

Elements Nursery and Garden Center in Beloit is in its first year of operations, and the new business is dependent on the weather, as one might expect.

"How the weather has been going right now, we have seen production pushed back by at least two weeks," said Christa Nilson, the nursery's owner.





“For 2022, I assume the spring flowers will be coming slower and the summer flowers will be available sooner than projected,” Nilson said.

“The cold weather definitely has had an effect on us, but we have adjusted and are ready for the spring season,” she said.

Ann Marie Cain, a manager at the Winnebago-Boone Farm Bureau in Illinois said most farmers in the area have not started planting yet, citing the cooler-than-average weather.

“Planting corn seeds won’t begin until May, but the cold weather might push it back if this weather continues,” said Jordan Schuler, the regional crops educator with UW Extension. Schuler’s region includes Rock and Jefferson counties in Wisconsin.

Farmers in Winnebago and Boone counties have noticed a significant contrast compared to last year.

“Last year farmers were able to get an early start on planting seeds, but most have not started this year because of the weather,” Cain said.

“I was told that the soil temperature is around 48 degrees, and farmers like it to be around 50 to 55 degrees,” Cain said. “The seeds won’t germinate until the soil gets

warm enough.”

Schuler added more precipitation, particularly a recent snowfall, has caused worry for farmers.

“Wetter soil with the colder weather has caused worry of potential disease and a decrease in yields,” Schuler said.

Farmers do have options if the cool, wet weather continues.

“Farmers can use a variety of seeds that can be planted in colder temperatures if need be,” Cain said.

“Other than delaying planting, farmers in Rock County and areas that have irrigation systems can use that to combat the frost buildup,” Schuler said.

