

# GARDEN SCARF TUTORIAL

---

From 70-degrees to 28-degrees and back within a four-day period– this is the new normal, right? Gardeners have always had to deal with unexpected frosts, but with the increased volatility of weather patterns that accompanies global climate change, many of us have been struggling to protect our plants from this temperature variability, particularly in the late fall/early winter and late spring, when plants face freezing temperatures without the insulation of snowfall.

You can buy plant jackets to help protect your plants, but if you're looking for something much cheaper, less bulky and unobtrusive enough to be left on the plant for weeks (or months) at a time, check out this tutorial for making **garden scarves** from leaves and tubular wound dressing. A garden scarf provides the insulation of a mulch, but in a form that's easy to apply and remove and re-apply as needed.



NOTE: This tutorial makes use of Surgilast tubular [elastic wound dressing](#), specifically the size intended for legs and arms, but other sizes might be useful depending on the plant.



1. First, cut a length of dressing. In the pictures below, the dressing is cut to elbow-length, unstretched, but consider the size of the base of the plant(s) you'd like to protect.



2. Tie one end of the cut dressing.





3. Stuff the dressing with leaves, careful to keep the open end rolled over the outside of the tubing.



The more leaves you stuff into a given section of the dressing, the thicker the scarf will be in that section, so consider the desired level of insulation and breathability. Even fully-stuffed, the scarf will bend flexibly.



4. Once you've finished stuffing the tube, do not tie the open end; rather, loop the netting at the open end over the knot of the tied end.







5. You can loop the scarf around the base of the plant you'd like to protect—



– or set it flat, without looping it, wherever there are roots you want to insulate.





6. When the plant no longer needs insulating, you can dump out the leaves and save the dressing, or you can store the whole scarf. Elastic is convenient, but it is not biodegradable and not made from renewable resources— however, its durability means it can be reused for a long time. Here's a scarf after 11 months of continuous outdoor use, grungy but still strong:

