

1983 Florida Freeze - December 1983. Severe freeze central/northern FL; about \$2.0 (4.0) billion damage to citrus industry; no deaths.

Western Storms and Flooding - 1982 Early 1983. Storms and flooding related to El Nino, especially in the states of WA, OR, CA, AZ, NV, ID, UT, and MT; approximately \$1.1 (2.2) billion in damage/costs; at least 45 deaths.

Gulf States Storms and Flooding - 1982 - Early 1983. Storms and flooding related to El Nino, especially in the states of TX, AR, LA, MS, AL, GA, and FL; approximately \$1.1 (2.2) billion in damage/costs; at least 50 deaths.

Hurricane Alicia - August 1983. Category 3 hurricane--TX; \$3.0 (5.9) billion damage/costs; 21 deaths.

Category 3 major hurricane (SSHWS/NWS)	
	
Hurricane Alicia rapidly intensifying just to the southeast of Texas late on August 17	
Formed	August 15, 1983
Dissipated	August 21, 1983
(Extratropical after August 20)	
Highest winds	1-minute sustained :115 mph (185 km/h)
Lowest pressure	962 mbar (hPa); 28.41 inHg
Fatalities	21 total
Damage	\$3 billion (1983 USD)
Areas affected	Mississippi , Louisiana , Texas , Oklahoma , Kansas , Nebraska , Upper Midwest
Part of the 1983 Atlantic hurricane season	

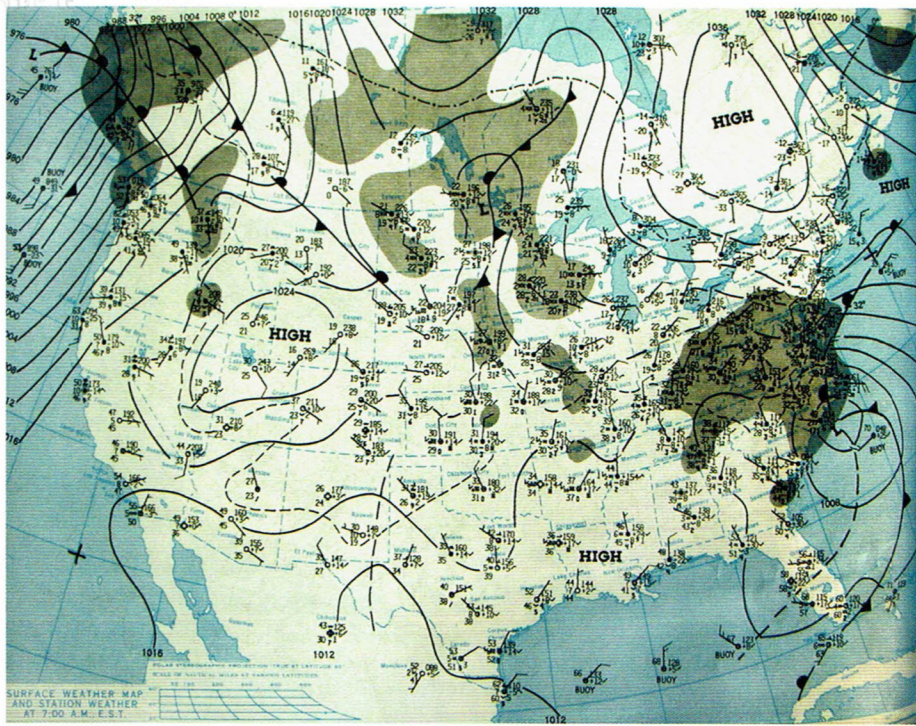
Hurricane Alicia was a small but powerful hurricane that caused major destruction within the southeastern parts of Texas in August of 1983. The third tropical cyclone, first named storm, and the only major hurricane of the very inactive 1983 Atlantic hurricane season, Alicia struck Galveston and Houston, Texas directly, causing \$3 billion (1983 USD)^[1] in damage and killing 21 people; this made it the worst Texas hurricane since Hurricane Carla in 1961.^[2] In addition, Alicia was the first billion-dollar tropical cyclone in Texas history,^[3] and the costliest tropical cyclone in the Atlantic until Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

Alicia was the first hurricane to hit the United States mainland since Hurricane Allen in August 1980. The time between the two storms totaled three years and eight days (1,103 days).^[4] Hurricane Alicia became the last major hurricane (Category 3 or higher) to strike Texas until the stronger Hurricane Bret in 1999 made landfall. Alicia was the first storm for which the National Hurricane Center issued landfall probabilities.^[5] It was also notable for the delayed post storm evacuation of Galveston Island (since the eye of the storm traveled the evacuation route up Interstate 45 from Galveston to Houston). The hurricane was also notable for the shattering of many windows in downtown Houston by loose gravel from the roofs of new skyscrapers and by other debris, prompting changes to rooftop construction codes.

The surface weather map for February 11, 1983. The storm tracked northeast from Tallahassee, Florida to east of Wilmington, North Carolina, while Arctic high pressure remained anchored to the north. NOAA Library

The Snowstorm of February 10-11, 1983

On February 10-11, 1983 a huge snowstorm swept up the Eastern Seaboard, burying an area from Virginia to New York in a swath of very heavy snow. This was a textbook setup for heavy snow,





Snow buries a neighborhood near Frederick, Maryland, February 12, 1983. Frederick, Maryland received 30 inches of snow. The maximum snowband associated with the storm stretched over Washington's western suburbs and extended west to the mountains. National Airport received 16.6 inches of snow; Manassas, Virginia totaled 22 inches of snow; and Damascus, Maryland measured 24 inches of snow. *Katie Kahan*



Sunrise over the water at Chesapeake Beach, Maryland, February 1983. Sleet and snow pellets reduced snowfall accumulations to the south and east of Washington. Between eight to twelve inches of snow fell in the southern portion of Calvert County, Maryland. Farther east, Salisbury, Maryland reported only 5.3 inches of snow and sleet. *Joseph Reintzel*

with a nearly stationary high-pressure area sitting north of New York in a position to provide cold air to the Washington area. At the same time, a moist low-pressure system had developed and was moving northeast from Alabama.

During the late evening of February 10, with the low over Georgia, light snow broke out in the Washington area. The snow slowly picked up during the overnight hours. By the morning of February 11, the surface low was positioned just east of Wilmington North Carolina. At that time, heavy snow was falling across the entire region. A tightening pressure gradient between the storm and the high-pressure area to the north caused northeast winds to increase, with gusts over 40 mph.

Most locations reported the heaviest snow-fall rates, commonly 3 inches per hour, during the late morning and again during the mid-to-late afternoon of February 11. The snow tapered off by evening. Many observers, particularly in the Maryland suburbs, reported several episodes of lightning and thunder. The snow thunderstorms along the Eastern Shore produced extremely strong winds and whiteout conditions.

Most of the southern and eastern suburbs recorded 15 to 20 inches while 20 to 30 inches fell in the northern and western suburbs. National Airport received 16.6 inches while 22.8 inches fell at both BWI and Dulles Airport.

In northwest Montgomery and Frederick Counties, the storm was
*the greatest ever recorded, easily exceeding

their totals received during the famous Knickerbocker Storm of January 1922. Germantown and Frederick both received 30 inches of snow. In western Loudoun County, Virginia, up to 38 inches of snow fell. Likewise, Braddock Heights, just west of Frederick, Maryland, received 34.9 inches.

From Washington east, snow pellets mixed in with the snow. That reduced the accumulations, but made for a considerably denser snow pack.

1983 “The Coldest Christmas Ever”

by Jaime McLeod | Monday, December 24th, 2012



Christmas in 1983, the nation’s cold weather lovers got a little more than they bargained for. Overall, the 1980s dished out some of the coldest Decembers on record, but 1983 was king of them all, with 70% of the month colder than average over much of the country.

On Christmas Eve and Christmas day of that year, more than 125 cities east of the Rockies broke temperature records for the day, and 34 hit the record cold temperatures for the entire month of December. These punishing temperatures, which dipped below zero in many areas, were also accompanied by brutal, stinging winds. In addition, heavy snow covered the ground from the Pacific Northwest through the Great Plains and Northern Appalachians.

Havre, Montana dipped to a numbing -50°F. Chicago, where high temperatures never went higher than -10° F during the several days leading up to Christmas, reached a low of -25° F. In Sioux Falls, S.D., temperatures dropped below 0° F on December 15 and remained there for more than nine days, dropping to -23 °F over Christmas. The area also saw 60 mph winds, which brought wind chills of -70 °F. The average temperature in Minneapolis for the month of 3.7° F, the coldest on record for the city. The barometric pressure at Miles City, Mont. reached 31.42 inches, a record for the U.S. Even normally balmy Huntsville, Ala., plunged down to -1° F, while Galveston, Texas, dipped to a frosty 14° F.

The Richmond International Airport had a low of 3°F on December 25, 1983.

Washington Dulles Intl Airport had a low of -2°F on December 25, 1983.

Washington Reagan National Airport, VA had a low of 3°F on December 25, 1983.

Dec 1983 FREEZE OF THE CENTURY' DAMAGES 90% OF THE CITRUS CROP IN FLORIDA

By JON NORDHEIMER and SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

Two days of record-breaking cold damaged nine-tenths of Florida's orange and grapefruit crop, state officials reported today. They said it was one of the most widespread blows against the industry in its history.

Doyle Conner, the Florida Secretary of Agriculture, said that when the losses are totaled, this week's freeze "may cause as much or more damage to Florida's citrus and vegetable industries" as the billion-dollar freeze 13 months ago.

The 1983 freeze, however, did not do much harm below the 11 counties at the northern border of the citrus belt. This week's freeze numbed even the southern edge of the belt, on a line from Palm Beach to Naples.

Citrus Belt 'Pushed South'

The long reach of the freeze, blanketing the entire peninsula, prompted Mr. Conner to describe it as "the freeze of the century."

"This one will cause us to rewrite the boundaries of the citrus belt," said Bobby McKown, executive vice president of Florida Citrus Mutual, an organization of citrus growers. "For several years the belt has been pushed south by the weather. This can only accelerate the shift to plant new groves in the southern counties."

A big question remaining is the fate of the Valencia orange crop.

Another Freeze Is Expected

The National Weather Service predicted another freeze early Wednesday through most of the citrus belt in the state's midsection.

Record cold also continued over much of the country. Nationwide, at least 126 deaths have been attributed to the cold wave. (Page A10.) In New York, moderating temperatures brought some relief but weather-related problems were still straining public and private agencies. (Page B1.)

Discussing the damage in Florida, Bernie Lester, executive director of the Florida Department of Citrus, said: "It will take days, probably weeks, before we can assess the full extent of what's happened. It is undeniable that the fresh fruit and juice markets will be hard hit by this."

Rush to Process Fruit The industry, shocked by the most widespread of four freezes to hit Florida in the last five winters, began rushing damaged citrus to processing plants to salvage as much as the damaged crop as possible. The Florida Citrus Commission is to meet Thursday to decide if an embargo should be placed on shipments from the state to prevent damaged citrus from being exported.

Meanwhile, state inspectors moved into orange and grapefruit groves to see how much of the crop on the trees can be salvaged. "Cuttings of fruit this morning leads us to conclude that 89 percent of all citrus throughout the state suffered some form of damage, either hard ice or slushy ice," Mr. McKown said. Even partly frozen mature fruit must be processed rapidly for juice or juice concentrate before the damage causes degeneration, officials said.

The growers are in a race to mobilize workers to pick fruit and get it shipped before warm weather returns and speeds spoiling. "This time cool weather will be on our side," said Dr. Lester. "Now we want it to remain cool so spoilage will be slowed down."

Florida's vegetable crop also was dealt a harsh blow by the freezing temperatures, which reached to the bean fields outside Miami, where temperatures hovered around 30 degrees. In the Tampa area, field crops were locked under sheets of ice from all-night attempts by farmers to protect them by watering.

Governor Declares Emergency

Gov. Bob Graham declared a state of emergency and said Federal inspectors were considering whether governmental assistance was warranted.

But despair settled over much of the industry. "One more night like this could pretty well wipe us all out up here," said Duke Crittenden, who owns 4,000 acres of groves in the northern part of the citrus belt.

There, at Christmas 1983, a two-day freeze caused nearly \$1 billion damage and killed trees on 120,000 acres. Moonscapes of stumps remain where damaged trees were pruned back drastically to encourage new growth. Experts say the cold this week wiped out the trees' chance of recovery.

Hope existed that while the fruit on trees throughout the state was damaged or destroyed, the trees themselves would survive and future production would not be sharply reduced, Dr. Lester said.

"We can't tell right away if cold has killed a tree," he said. "It might be weeks before limbs start splitting, a telltale sign."

Valencia oranges, used almost exclusively for juice and juice concentrate, represent more than half of the state's citrus crop. They do not ripen until March or April, and how badly they will be hurt is a question. In past winters, Valencia oranges have suffered freeze damage but have "healed" enough before harvesting to produce juice, although on a reduced basis.

The industry has been rocked by other misfortunes that have raised questions about its future at a time when Florida has been overtaken by Brazil as the biggest and most reliable producer of oranges and concentrates.

A Mediterranean fruit fly scare in Florida last year had barely subsided before citrus canker was discovered in nurseries supplying trees to freeze-depleted groves. A plant disease that leaves unsightly lesions on fruit and leaves, the canker appeared to be controlled after millions of young trees were destroyed.

But the scare impeded the replanting of groves in the hard-hit northern counties, a development that, in the freeze conditions this week, probably saved growers millions of dollars on plants that would have been killed by temperatures in the low teens.