

THINGS TO DO LIST FOR MARCH, 2017

PRUNING – Poinsettias can be pruned back now. Cut below the blooms to make the plant fuller. Prune fruit tree branches that are pointing towards the ground or crossing each other. Cut off all dead limbs back to good wood. Prune spring flowering trees and shrubs after they bloom and hedges that are overgrown. In 3 weeks coleus cuttings can be rooted in a glass, in a sunny window, and then planted in a pot or in the ground.

PLANTING – Time to plant lots of herbs, onion sets, cantaloupes, collards, cowpeas, cucumbers, mustard, okra, peanuts, peppers, pole beans, pumpkins, radish, spinach, sweet corn, sweet potatoes, squash, broccoli, eggplant, watermelon, turnips and tomatoes. Flowers to plant at this time are balsam, begonia, cosmos, cockscomb petunia, phlox, pentas, salvia, sun impatiens and zinnia. Bulbs to plant at this time are Amaryllis, gladioli, lilies, and gloxinias. Plant caladiums in amended soil, with peat, cow manure and compost.

BLOOMING– The showy tabebuia tree announces spring. The turquoise jade vine is spectacular along with the flame of the forest, Brazilian red cloak, chalice vine, petrea or queen's wreath, lady slipper orchids, cassias, bromeliads, begonias, citrus trees, mango trees, lobster claw heliconias, chenille, hibiscus, bougainvillea, yesterday, today and tomorrow, nun's orchid, phalaenopsis orchids, ixoras, kalanchoes, pentas, crinum lily, plumbago, thryallis, firebush, Amazon lily, amaryllis, wax begonia, verbena, torenia, salvia, portulaca, snapdragon, petunia, marigold, impatiens, geranium, dianthus, passion vine, peace lily and roses are just a few. Visit a nursery now to start your showy potted plants and hanging baskets for summer color.

PLANT ADVICE –

- March is a good time to start new plants from cuttings.
- Mulching plants is especially important in South Florida's dry months of March & April. Mulch holds and preserves moisture in the soil. It protects soil from the intense heat of the sun. A constant supply of organic matter provides for optimum plant growth. It prevents quick drying out of the soil. The decayed mulch adds needed organic humus to our poor sandy soil. Most any kind of organic matter can be used, including grass clippings, kitchen scraps, coffee grounds, leaves, wood chips, sawdust and peat moss. The value of mulch cannot be over-emphasized. However, don't expect decayed mulch to supply all plant nutrients needs. Regular fertilizing, using a plant food that includes minor elements is essential here. Weed first and throw them all away in the garbage. Keep weed containers hid in the bushes, around in the garden. Drill holes in the bottom of them, so they don't collect water.
- Water lawns once a week and feed two times a year, spring and fall. Use a balanced fertilizer, 6-6-6- or 10-10-10 with minor nutrients. Water after applying. Avoid the high nitrogen plant foods with nitrogen in the 20's. St. Augustine grass should be mowed at three or four inches in height. (Tell that to your lawn man). Shorter mowing causes more weeds to grow and your grass to be in stress. Mowing high makes the grass blades take nutrients from the air and soil with the process of photo-synthesis, converting them to new plant growth. The most beautiful lawns are those that are mowed high.
- Fertilize lawns, palms, trees and shrubs now. Plant those seeds you have laying around.
- Control black leaf on roses. Make sure you pick up and throw away the diseased leaves.
- Place orchids in a shadier place as the sun's intensity increases. Apply time release fertilizer. Start repotting the ones that need it. They will be easier to care for, if they are mounted on trees.
- Plant tropical and subtropical fruit trees now so they can be well rooted by winter.

INSECTS – Insects love to eat the new growth of plants. Curling leaves on citrus are caused by the caterpillar of the black swallowtail butterfly. Do not kill them. Curling and unsightly leaves are visual signs of aphid attacks and leaf miner. Watch for lubber grasshoppers, they grow three to four inches long and hatch out in March, April and May. At their early stage, they are black and orange and about one inch long. This is the only time they can be killed with roach spray. Do not get any spray on your plants.

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