

THINGS TO DO LIST FOR APRIL, 2017

PRUNING – Overgrown crotons can be pruned back one foot from the ground. In a few weeks new growth will appear. Two or more branches will grow from the old growth. This will produce a dense compact plant. The cuttings can be put in the ground to start new plants, if they don't have scale. If you have scale, try washing off with the hose or use organocide 3-in-1 organic garden spray. Trim snail damaged leaves and sprinkle Sluggo snail bait around the plant. The dead flowers on annuals and perennials can be pinched off, this redirects the plants energy into new growth, rather than going to seed. Plants that have bloomed may need to be shaped up. Cut all damaged branches back to good wood. Hurricane season starts June 1st, start preparing by trimming palms 9-3 o'clock. Protect your perimeter with dense foliage to stop the damage from high winds and the views of your neighbors.

PLANTING - Caladiums, cannas, Easter lily, blood lily, Louisiana iris, amaryllis, spider lily, day lily, crinum lily and elephant ear can be planted this month. Divide large clumps of plants now by pulling them apart or using a sharp bread knife. Some examples of plants that need separating are grasses, ginger, heliconias, bird of paradise and ferns. Ugly ferns can be cut back now. New growth will come out again. It's time to plant beans (snap, pole and lima), Southern pea, pepper, eggplant, cherry tomato and watermelon. Some heat loving herbs to plant now are basil, oregano, sage, Mexican tarragon and rosemary. Colorful summer plants: coleus, marigold, periwinkle, pentas, galardia, reed stem orchid, moss rose, torenia, begonia, verbena, caladium, ornamental sweet potato vine, shrimp, ornamental pepper, purslane, lantana, marigold, crown of thorn, melampodium, blue porterweed, begonia, blue-daze, and salvia. Purchase blooming plants from your local nursery every month to keep your garden in full bloom year round. Add a sunny butterfly garden in your spare time, and enjoy up 83 species of butterflies that are here in Broward County.

BLOOMING – Day lily, iris, longan tree, bromeliad, heliconia, shaving brush tree, gaillardia, jacaranda, tabebuia tree, begonias, citrus trees, chenille, bougainvillea, penta, plumbago, thryallis, torenia, crown of thorns, melampodium, shrimp, amaryllis, salvia, portulaca, marigold, geranium, dianthus, mussaenda, white and orange geiger tree, rose, angel trumpet, cassia and orchids are just a few that are blooming this month.

PLANT ADVICE – Watch for lubber grasshoppers that are hatching out now. Take cuttings of coleus. Repot orchids if needed and fertilize with Dynamite time release. Look for thrips and mites on them. Ixora may have mottled red and orange leaves; this is caused by phosphorus and potassium deficiency. Use fertilizer and coffee grounds around acid loving plants. If you see sooty mold it can be caused by scale or aphids. Try washing with soapy water first before using any chemicals. Air layering and making new plants from cuttings can be done now that the weather is warmer. Keep them damp not wet. Plant coleus in pots, and use them to fill in around the garden. Lawns should be mowed 3 to 4 inches high. Let the grass grow as long as you can between mowing, to choke out the weeds. Scalping the lawn makes weeds come up more. It exposes the soil to light, germinating approximately 100 weed seeds per square inch. If you haven't fertilized last month, do it now. Watch for nutrient deficiencies or other problems on palms. Use Lesco palm fertilizer on almost everything. Read the label. Check for insects. Do research on them. Some are good ones that eat the bad ones. Plants that have ants in them, try submerging the whole plant in a bucket of water for a few minutes. To prevent fewer weeds use 3 inches of mulch. It will be a long, hot, dry summer so check sprinklers. Soak new plants in a bucket of water for 10 minutes before planting in the ground. Water the plant in the hole when you plant it. Place it one inch higher than the surrounding soil, then mulch.

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