

THINGS TO DO LIST FOR MAY 2017

PRUNING – Now is the time to do major pruning in zones 10B & 11. Knowing when and how to prune, you can improve any tree or plant's shape and production. Shrubs and vines can be pruned several times a year. Fruiting or flowering trees and plants should be pruned after they have produced fruit or flowers. For hurricane protection, consult an arborist about keeping plants and trees out of power lines and to lessen the danger of uprooting and falling on your house. Remove all dead, diseased and weak branches. Heavy pruning on trees can be done in stages with a three year program, trimming 1/3 of the tree each year. Large hedges can be trimmed on one side, top, then the other side, 2 weeks in between each trimming.

PLANTING – It's time to plant peppers, sweet potatoes, southern peas and okra. Summer flowers to plant may include, wax begonias, balsam, bromeliad, cosmos, coleus, cockscomb, crossandra, four-o'clocks, heliconia, sunflower, gaillardia, hollyhock, lantana, marigold, morning glory, moss rose, vinca, melapodium, pinta, porterweed, salvia, torenia, verbena, ornamental sweet potato and pepper. Herbs to plant include Mexican tarragon, basil and rosemary. Bulbs to plant now are amaryllis, caladium, crinum and zephyranthes. Look up information about the tree or plant on the computer before you plant it. Place a name tag on it. I use a cut up Clorox jug and a paint marker pen. Move the potted plant around in your garden until you find it looks the best. Leave in the pot until the roots grow to the bottom. Soak it in a bucket of water for 10 minutes then plant it in the ground.

BLOOMING – This month the show offs will be dragon fruit, Bahama, apple blossom and barkariana cassias, African tulip tree, geiger tree, jacaranda, tabebuia, royal poinciana, Texas wild olive, lignum vitae, ragoon creeper, forest bells, allamanda, angel's trumpet, crown of thorns, cassandra, jatropa, gardenia, bougainvilleas, daylily, begonia, chenille, firespike, firebush, hibiscus, ixora, lantana, orchid, mussaenda, penta, plumbago, porterweed, queen crape-myrtle, queens-wreath, ruellia, shrimp plant, thryallis and ground orchid, Purchasing something different that is blooming or fruiting every month.

PLANT ADVICE – Monitor the garden for pests and diseases. Adjust the irrigation based on the amount of rainfall. One inch of water wets a sandy soil to a depth of 12 inches. Do not fertilize plants or trees if it has been dry or it is extremely hot. Now is the time to plant seeds and propagate new plants by cuttings and air-layering, Plant cuttings in a 70/30 mix of peat moss and perlite; place the pot in the shade, some morning sun, keep moist and out of the wind. Mulch plant beds to reduce the evaporation from the soil and cut down on weeds. Depth should be 3" after settling. Using eight layers of B&W newspaper under the mulch will help for a season. Now is the time to plant in the ground and prepare for the summer rains. Cut back coleus and start cuttings in a clear glass of water. It takes two weeks to root. Do not plant in soil with fertilizer in it after rooting them in water. Plant seeds at the base of the mother plant. Transplant after they get several sets of leaves on them into a 4 inch pot.

LAWNS – Watch for yellowing of the lawn grass, this could be the sign of chinch bugs. Keep the grass 3 to 4 inches long to choke out the weeds. Try using Scotts Turf Builder or Lesco Palm Food on your St. Augustine grass, instead of weed and feed. Water only when it needs it, do not put on automatic.

FRUIT RIPENING – Banana, Barbados cherry, calamondon, fig, jaboticaba, jack fruit, lemon, mango, miracle fruit, mulberry, natal plum, papaya, passion fruit, and papaya.

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