

THINGS TO DO LIST FOR JUNE

PRUNING – Pinch back the tips of the spring growth on plants that you want to be bushier and more compact. Poinsettias lost their color in March, and new growth needs to be cut back. Large dense shade trees should be thinned out, so strong hurricane winds will pass through them, rather than blow the trees over. Never remove more than 1/3 of the total green growth at a time. Remove water shoots, and root suckers from below the graft line on fruit trees. Lightly prune summer flowering shrubs like hibiscus, oleander, and ixora to increase blooms. Prepare trees and yard for hurricanes.

PROPIGATION - The best time to air layer and graft is spring and early summer. It is time to propagate house and patio plants; old ones are probably getting tall and leggy. Most of them can be rooted from cuttings in soilless mix or water. Woody plants, such as hibiscus, ixora, crotons, ti and dracena, are easy to start just by sticking them in the ground. Some plants can be divided now to make more.

INSECTS – Chinch Bugs love St. Augustine grass this time of year. Watch for brown spots in dry areas. Look at all your plants and check for infestations of scale, lubber grasshoppers, aphids, whitefly, and mealy bugs. Insects like new plant growth and the undersides of the leaves. Lubber grasshoppers like the plants that are in the lily family, crinum and amaryllis. Appearing now are weevils, caterpillars, slugs, snails and millipedes. I use Sluggo snail bait for slugs and snails, fire ant killer for millipedes, the hose to wash off scale with high pressure. Spray around outside of the house for insects coming inside.

PLANTING –Put your potted trees and permanent plants in the ground before the rains start. If some irrigation is available. When planting trees, carefully remove any excess soil that is on top of the roots, and make sure that the top of the root ball is 1 inch higher than the surrounding soil. Avoid adding amendments such as potting soil, peat or fertilizers to the planting hole, Water well to make sure there are no air pockets. Make sure the roots do not dry out after planting for several weeks. Apply mulch around newly planted trees and plants, keep one foot away, if not it could cause fungus and rot. Refresh mulch elsewhere if needed. PLANT: cosmos, cockscomb, coleus, vinca, dianthus, salvia, begonias, marigolds, sunflowers, zinnias, gallardia, portulaca, torenia, amaranthus and caladium bulbs. VEGETABLES: cowpeas, cassava, chayote, bonito, cherry or Everglades tomatoes, Chinese yams, malanga, pigeon pea, okra, peanuts, squash, onions, pumpkin and sweet potatoes. HEAT LOVING HERBS: basil, ginger, Mexican tarragon, summer savory and rosemary. BUTTERFLIES: Milkweed, firebush, Desert Cassia, coontie and pintas.

FERTILIZING –Soil nutrients rapidly leach out of the root zone area in our porous sandy soil. Only use fertilizer when plants show signs of being nutrient deficient. I use Peters 20-20-20, ½ or ¼ strength, when I water my potted plants but only when they need it. Save those gallon milk jugs. Keep a few by the door. Use Dynamite, time released or water soluble fertilizer, on orchids. NEW – Orchid Food Gain at Home Depot, 13-2-13. Use Lesco Palm food on palms and most plants, except ferns. Use diluted liquid fertilizer on ferns, but be very careful not to use too much. Careful fertilizing when the temperature is over 85 degrees. I use organic manure and compost on all my edible plants and trees when they need it.

FRUIT – Tropical fruits are coming into season including early avocado, banana, Barbados cherry, guava, fig, bunch grapes, jaboticaba, mango, monstera, muntingia, natal plum, papaya, passion fruit, pineapple, pitomba, sapodilla, Surinam cherry, tamarind and wampi, For those fruit trees that you just can't find and want to make a day of it, drive to Homestead. Pine Island Nursery, Turnpike to Eureka Drive, Exit 13, 16300 S.W. 184th Street, Miami. Lunch at Shivers B-B-Q, 28001 S. Dixie Hwy. and then to Alex's Fruit Trees, Alex Pinsky, 786-351-1521, 14000 S.W. 82 Ave. Krome Ave. and S.W. 136 St. if you can find it.

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