

THINGS TO DO LIST FOR OCTOBER 17th, 2017

PRUNING –If you planted a wind block on your perimeter for hurricane protection and have branches that are damaged, leave them in place until the end of hurricane season. They will protect the interior plants again. Then prune. Shape up shrubs and trees that were severely damaged from the hurricane, before the cool weather. Remove dead flowers and damaged leaves. Prune trees and shrubs that will touch your house. Remove all dead wood, and branches that are crossing and rubbing.

PLANTING – Now is a good time to decide if you want a particular plant or tree taken out or replaced. Get all your trees and landscape plants into the ground before the cold weather. Plant different textures of plants together and mix colors to create interest. Purchase plants that do something like bloom, fruit, change color or attract wildlife. Some good choices are mussaenda, Hawaiian ti, chenille plant, coleus, banana, mango, avocado, and natives for the wildlife. The bulbs that can be planted now are onions, African lily, amaryllis, Aztec lily, calla, crinum, elephant ear, gladiolus, gloriosa, iris, kaffir lily, walking iris, society garlic, spider lily, rain lily and zephyr lily. Some flowering plants to plant now are kalanchoe, daisy, marigold, lobelia, impatiens, geranium, dusty miller, dianthus, carnation, browallia, begonia, aster, amaranthus, alyssum, gaillardia, torenia and pentas. Herbs can be grown in containers outdoors or on porches and balconies. Assorted herbs in hanging baskets are out of the way of crawling insects on the ground. They also can be brought in under shelter from the rain if needed. Plant cool season crops now. Propagate coleus now to share with our new Hwd. Garden Club members.

FEEDING –Fertilize with less nitrogen at this time. It's the last month to fertilize ornamentals, palms and fruit trees until February or March. Use on plants and trees that show poor nutrition or damage from the hurricane. I like kitchen scraps that contain coffee grounds, Lesco Palm food, Black Kow Manure. Try a controlled-released fertilizer like osmocote, it gives longer results. Or spread Miracle Gro Garden SOIL around plants that are growing in poor soil. Top with small pine bark chips that are now sold at Kmart instead of Home Depot. Use Miracle Gro Potting MIX for your potted plants. Perlite can be added for potted plants that need more drainage.

WEEDS – B&W newspapers or cardboard with two inches of mulch on top will discourage weeds from competing with your established plants for a few months. Nutgrass thrives in lawns and soils that are too wet for a long time. Cut off the water and mow high every three weeks to help choke out the weeds. For many years I have dropped my cuttings and leaves at the base of each plant and I hardly ever have to fertilize or weed. Lay stepping stones, size 24" X 24", weighing about 70 pounds apiece, to create walkways and patios. Concrete sand must be spread first and last if you want them to stay in place.

BLOOMING – If the following plants, vines and trees still have foliage on them after the hurricane, they will be blooming now. Crossandra, pentas, plumbago, mussendas, brunfelsia, chinelle, cassia, begonia, blue daze, portulaca, purslane, frangipani, crown of thorns, periwinkle, marigold, impatien, buttercup, orchid, rose, ixora, royal poinciana, dwarf poinciana, bouganvillia, allamanda, thryallis, zinnia, sweet almond, brugmansia, torenia, garlic vine, silk floss tree, lance pod, golden rain tree, orchid tree and golden shower tree.

INSECTS – The best way to minimize the migration of toxic chemicals into our natural environment is to reduce or eliminate their use. Use natural products, oils and soaps for insect pest management. Check your plants regularly and treat your problems early. Spraying with a high powered water hose and wiping off the bugs with your hands works for most of the time for me. Keep a healthy landscape and "choose disease resistant plants." Use sluggo bait for snails.

Conserve water. Use a small "battery powered" blower or broom and dustpan instead of a hose to clean the debris off your patio, sidewalk and driveway.

Susan Berry, President of the Hollywood Garden Club, Florida Master Gardener, Advanced Master Naturalist, Certified Gardening Consultant and Landscape Designer. FMNP Land and FFGC Earth Steward

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