

THINGS TO DO LIST FOR JANUARY 2018

PRUNING – After the cool weather has passed, prune the dead branches from the trees that have finished fruiting. Non-spring flowering and fruiting shrubs and trees can be cut back at the end of the month to improve their form. Prune seed pods, small twigs, and crossed branches. Never prune palm fronds that are above the 9:00 – 3:00 line. Some plants may have lost their leaves from the cold weather; they will come back when it gets warmer.

PLANTING – Woody shrubs, herbs, bulbs, and most vegetables can be planted this month. Visit your local nursery once a month to keep your garden in full bloom year-round. Leave plants in pots and move them around in the garden until they like where they are, then plant them.

WATERING – Adjust irrigation based on rainfall and temperature. Water individual plants when needed by hand, instead of watering the whole yard. Water before it gets really cold as well as the morning after, before the sun comes up. It helps to keep the heat in the ground. Very handy tip! Fill two, ½ gal. containers, with ½ strength, 20-20-20 fertilizer and keep them close to your front and back doors.

BLOOMING – Bougainvillea, roses, cassia, clerodendrum, coral bean, ixora, locustberry, kapok tree, Christmas cactus, kalanchoe, penta, periwinkle, primrose, geranium, pansy, Spanish bayonet, begonia, snapdragon, crown-of-thorns, ginger, desert rose, heliconia, hibiscus, firespike, salvia, scarlet red cloak, shrimp plant, Hong Kong orchid, crinum lily, chenille, plumbago, and yesterday, today and tomorrow.

PLANT ADVICE – Bring in orchids that are sensitive to the cold if the temperature drops to 50 degrees. Protect sensitive plants with blankets or sheets. Never use plastic. Cover soil with 3 inches of mulch. Garden solar lights can be put in 3 or 4 foot PVC or lead pipes along the sunny paths. Use a picker upper to gather fallen rotten fruit. Put weeds in the garbage, not in the compost pile. It isn't hot enough to kill them.

INSECTS – Don't throw cuttings in the compost that have insects on them, put them in the garbage. Remove scale by spraying with a high-powered hose once a week, crush with your hands, or spray with horticultural oil. Pet-friendly snail bait can be sprinkled around plants that show signs of attack. Repeat in one week. Get rid of plants that need constant spraying with insecticides.

FERTILIZING – Established palms should be fertilized with a slow release palm fertilizer like Lesco. Epsom salts can be used on palms with yellowing fronds. Place tea and coffee grounds around acid-loving plants.

FRUIT RIPENING – Banana, sapote, carambola, egg fruit, fig, grapefruit, jaboticaba, king orange, lemon, macadamia nut, miracle fruit, strawberry tree, Natal plum, papaya, pineapple, roselle, sweet orange, tangelo, tangerine and Key lime