

## **THINGS TO DO LIST FOR FEBRUARY 2018**

**PRUNING** – Prune during a waxing moon to encourage growth; during a waning moon, it discourages growth. Each plant has its own optional trim time. Good rule of thumb, prune after flowering or fruiting. Deadhead flowers to encourage new blooms. Cut back wild, diseased, dead and crossed branches. Cut back crotons if they have scale, throw away the cuttings in the garbage. Overgrown plants should be pruned back gradually. Try planting some of the cuttings at the base of each plant you cut back. Cut the tops off of ferns, grasses, dead heliconias and canna lilies. Do not cut back plants that bloom in the spring. Summer bloomers should be O.K. Plants that bloom all the time, like shrimp plants, should be trimmed in the summer.

**PLANTING** – Flowers and vegetables that bear crops above ground plant in the light, from the day the moon is new till to the day it is full. Plant flowering bulbs, biennial and perennial flowers and vegetables that bear crops below ground below ground during the dark, from the day after it is full to the day before it is new. For planting vegetables see, IFAS Florida vegetable gardening guide.

**WATERING** – Pentas do not require a lot of water. Turn off automatic watering systems and only water when the plants show signs of wilting. Water your yards well on the day before a cold front passes through. Or turn on the afternoon before it. Watering will trap ground heat and will make sure the plants have sufficient water to withstand the drying cold winds. Check sprinkler heads for clogging. Test with your finger each potted plant for moisture before watering.

**BLOOMING** – Orchids in bloom include phalaenopsis, nun's orchids, oncidiums and cattleyas. Some fruit trees in bloom are citrus, avocado, mulberry, mango, papaya and banana. Other bloomers are flame vine, begonia, bromeliad, cassia, bougainvillea, ixora, kalanchoe, pentas, geranium, impatiens, angel trumpet, blue daze, pansy, crown of thorns, ginger, desert rose, helconia, hibiscus, firespike, salvia, scarlet red cloak, crinum lily, chenille, gaillardia, lantana, marigolds, milkweed, panama rose, periwinkle, petunia, blue and white plumbago, shrimp, thryallis, white bird of paradise, canna, rose, amazon lilies and blackberry lilies.

**INSECTS** – Monitor the garden for insects and diseases every day. Ants and snails are in my garden now. Sprinkle bait lightly to kill them. Scale is returning on crotons. Bayer drench has been suggested to me. A high-powered hose spray on plants and wiping off the insects with your hands is my best way. Also saturating plants with several drops of Ivory soap in a spray bottle might help. Safer Soap worked for me. To identify go to IFAS – Insect ID lab.

**PLANT ADVICE** – It is time to plan new garden projects now, a path preferably of 24: X 24” stepping stones. - a compost area, a fence, pergola, a new B-B-Q area, patio. Feed your lawn the day after a heavy rain, not when it needs water. Be sure the grass is dry before applying fertilizer. Replace grass when you can, with drought tolerant, low maintenance plants and ground covers. Fertilize at the end of this month if you didn't Jan. or Feb. Buy fertilizer NOW. Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.

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