

## THINGS TO DO LIST FOR MAY 2018

**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 preparation, hire an arborist to trim plants and trees away from power lines and away from 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, pentas, 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. Find information about the plant or tree on the computer before you plant it. Place a name tag on it. I use a cut-up Clorox jug, paint marker pen, hole punch and a coated wire. Move the potted plant around in your garden until you see it thriving. That's the right place. Leave it in the pot until the roots grow to the bottom. Before planting, soak it in a bucket of water for 10 minutes.

**BLOOMING** – This month, the show offs will be dragon fruit, Bahama cassia, apple blossom cassia, barkeriana cassia and desert cassias, bromeliad, African tulip tree, geiger tree, jacaranda, tabebuia, royal poinciana, Texas wild olive, lignum vitae, rangoon creeper, forest bells, allamanda, angel's trumpet, crown of thorns, cassandra, jatropha, gardenia, bougainvilleas, daylily, begonia, chenille, firespike, firebush, hibiscus, ixora, lantana, orchid, mussaenda, pentas, plumbago, porterweed, queen crape-myrtle, queens-wreath vine, ruellia, shrimp plant, thryallis and ground orchid, Purchase 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. Water a day before you fertilize. 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 where it will get some morning sun but be mostly in the shade. Keep moist and out of the wind. Mulch plant beds to reduce evaporation from the soil and cut down on weeds. Mulch should be 3" deep after settling. Use eight layers of B&W newspaper under the mulch to help keep down weeds for a season. Now is the time to put new plants in the ground before the summer rains. Cut back coleus and start cuttings in a clear glass of water for about 2 weeks. Plant rooted cuttings in a 4 inch pot with soilless mix. Let grow for several months until it gets rooted, then put it in the ground or larger pot.

**LAWNS** – Watch for yellowing of the lawn grass, this could be a 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. Use a tuna can to measure rainfall.

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

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