

THINGS TO DO FOR JULY 2018

PRUNING – For plants that bloom in the summer, prune after flowering. Wait until almost spring for winter bloomers. Large dense trees should be thinned out so storm winds can blow through them. Remove water shoots and root suckers. Throw away weeds, fallen fruit, and cuttings that are diseased or have insects on them. Leave the healthy pruned clippings of the plant at its base; it will replace some of the nutrients that it took out of the soil. If you don't like the look of the cuttings, cover them with mulch. Trim limbs that will fall on your house and the ones that animals can use to get on your roof. Palm seeds can be trimmed off when they are young so they don't fall and sprout. Trim fronds at 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock. Dead diseased palms go in the garbage. Keep your perimeter shrubs high to protect your yard from hurricane winds. None of my crotons were hurt in the last hurricane.

INSECTS – Control snails, which multiply rapidly in the rainy season, with Sluggo snail bait. A hoe works well, too, just after a rain. Try Organocide. It is an insecticide, fungicide and miticide. Use it on croton scale. One quart makes 16 gallons. Mix 1 oz. with ½ gallon of water. Lubber grasshoppers can be cut in half with the clippers. Sneak from above and behind.

PLANTING – When purchasing plants in the nursery, check the roots to see if they are pot-bound. Sometimes the largest plant in the selection is not the best one. Before planting, place it in a bucket of water to soak. Then put it in the hole and fill with water and soil. Tamp around the plant so the roots have full contact with the soil. Keep it moist for about two weeks, then every other day until there are signs of growth. Then water along with the other plants. Potted plants that drain quickly and have roots out the bottom of the pot can be repotted now. Choose a new pot that is two inches larger in diameter. Make sure the top of the soil mix is two inches below the rim to allow space for watering.

FEEDING - Be careful feeding your plants in the heat. For potted plants, use time release or liquid fertilizer at half strength. Fertilize lightly only the plants that need it. Keep a weak solution mixed in a gallon jug at the front and back doors. Use Epson salts on palms that have yellowing fronds. Palms and crotons can be fertilized with Lesco palm food with minor elements. It's too hot to use weed & feed on lawns now. Read the label before using any fertilizer. For acid-loving plants, use your coffee grounds and used tea bags. Place kitchen scraps around plants in poor soil; it will feed the earth worms and some of the hungry wildlife.

WATERING – Routinely check sprinklers for repairs. Watch for dry soil areas after your sprinklers have gone off. Water your plants that are wilted in the morning, not at night. When watering by hand, look at each plant for signs of diseases or bugs. The main watering advice now is keep everything alive and well in the heat.

BLOOMING – There are at least 80 different annuals and perennials that are in bloom at this time, so there isn't any reason not to have a garden or patio full of colorful plants. Plant pots with plants and make sure you can move them around or indoors when needed.

Susan Berry, President of the Hollywood Garden Club, Florida Master Gardener 1998, Advanced Master Naturalist, Certified Garden Consultant and Landscape Designer, Florida Master Naturalist Program, Land Steward. & FFGC Earth Steward.