

THINGS TO DO LIST FOR MAY 2019

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 each year. Large hedges can be trimmed on one side, the top, then the other side, with two weeks between each trimming. For energy, harness your anxiety. Let it work for you.

PLANTING – It's time to plant peppers, sweet potatoes, southern peas and okra. Summer flowers include wax begonia, balsam, bromeliad, cosmos, coleus, cockscomb, crossandra, four-o'clocks, heliconia, sunflower, gaillardia, hollyhock, lantana, marigold, morning glory, moss rose, vinca, melampodium, pinta, 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, hole punch and a coated wire. Move the potted plant around in your garden until it shows where it likes it the best, that's the right place. Leave it in the pot until the roots grow to the bottom. Soak it in a bucket of water for 10 minutes then plant it in the ground. Put water in the hole first. Now is a good time to put your potted plants in the ground.

BLOOMING – This month, some of the show-offs will be butterfly plants, dragon fruit, bromeliad, African tulip tree, geiger tree, gardenia, jacaranda, tabebuia, royal poinciana, Texas wild olive, lignum vitae, rangoon creeper, forest bell, allamanda, angel's trumpet, crown of thorns, jatropha, gardenia, bougainvillea, daylily, begonia, chenille, firespike, firebush, hibiscus, ixora, lady of the night, lantana, orchid, mussaenda, penta, plumbago, porterweed, queen crape myrtle, queen's wreath, ruellia, shrimp plant, sweet almond, star jasmine, thryallis, ground orchid, and several varieties of cassia including Bahama, apple blossom, barkeriana and desert cassia. 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. Use a tuna can to measure inches of rainfall. 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 in filtered, morning sun, keep moist and out of the wind. Mulch plant beds to reduce the evaporation from the soil and cut down on weeds. The depth should be 3" after settling. Put down cardboard or 8-12 layers of newspaper under the mulch, this will help keep down the weeds for a season. Put pulled weeds in the garbage, not the compost pile. Start coleus cuttings in a clear glass of water and keep the water clean for about 3 weeks. Plant 5 rooted cuttings in a 4 inch pot. Let it grow for several months in moist soil until roots come out the bottom. Then put it in the ground or a larger pot.

LAWNS – Watch for dead and yellowing of the lawn grass, this could be a sign of chinch bugs. Get professional help. Keep the grass 3 to 4 inches long to choke out the weeds. Water only when it needs it. If you fertilize it now you will be mowing every week.

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

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