

THINGS TO DO LIST FOR JUNE 2019

PRUNING – Pinch back the tips of the spring growth on plants that you want to be more compact. Poinsettias lost their color in March, and new growth needs to be cut back. Large dense shade trees should be thinned out, so strong hurricane winds will pass through them, rather than blow the trees over. Never remove more than 1/3 of the total green growth at a time. For fruit trees, remove water shoots, and root suckers from below the graft line. Prune summer flowering shrubs like hibiscus, oleander, and ixora to increase blooms. Prepare trees and yard for hurricanes. Keep perimeter shrubs high to help block the winds.

PROPAGATION - The best time to air layer and graft is spring and early summer. Old coleus can be cut back, and new plants started from the cuttings. Place in water or in soilless mix to root. Woody plants, such as hibiscus, ixora, crotons, ti and dracena, are easy to start just by sticking them in the ground. Grasses and some plants like liriopoe can be divided now to make more. Pull weeds before they go to seed.

INSECTS – Brown spots in dry areas of your lawn might mean you have Chinch Bugs. Look over your plants carefully for insects. Mosquito season is here, eliminate all standing water. They only need 8 days to reproduce. Spray around the foundation of the house for insects.

PLANTING –When planting trees or bushes soak in a bucket of water for 15 minutes first. Loosen soil to look at the roots. Make sure they are not tightly wrapped around each other. Remove any excess soil that is on top of the roots and plant the top of the root ball 1 inch higher than the surrounding soil. Water the plant in the hole. Cover with soil. Do not amend the soil. Pack firmly in the hole. Put mulch around the base 3 inches away from the trunk of the tree or bush. Water well again. Make sure the roots do not dry out after planting for several weeks. Refresh mulch elsewhere if needed. I pile the old mulch around my plants and replace with new mulch around the beds. New mulch uses the nitrogen out of the soil to break it down. **PLANT:** cosmos, cockscomb, coleus, vinca, dianthus, salvia, begonias, marigolds, sunflowers, zinnias, gaillardia, portulaca, purslane, torenia, amaranthus and caladium bulbs. **VEGETABLES:** beans, cowpeas, cassava, chayote, bonito, eggplant, cherry or Everglades tomatoes, Chinese yams, malanga, pigeon pea, okra, peanuts, squash, onions, pumpkin and sweet potatoes. **HEAT LOVING HERBS:** basil, ginger, Mexican tarragon, summer savory and rosemary. **BUTTERFLY PLANTS:** Corky stem passion vine, passion flower, tropical sage, milkweed, firebush, desert cassia, coontie and pintas. Do not use pesticides in your butterfly garden. For pests use a strong jet of water or hand pick them off.

FERTILIZING –Soil nutrients leach out quickly in our porous sandy soil. Only use fertilizer when plants show signs of being nutrient deficient. I use 20-20-20, ½ or ¼ strength, when I water my potted plants. Save those gallon milk jugs. Keep a few by the door already mixed and labeled. Use time released or water-soluble fertilizer, on orchids. Use palm food on palms and most plants, except ferns. Be careful fertilizing when the temperature is over 85 degrees. I use cow manure, used coffee grounds, Miracle Grow Garden Soil or compost now that it is so hot.

FRUIT – Tropical fruits are coming into season including early avocado, banana, Barbados cherry, guava, fig, bunch grapes, jaboticaba, lychee, mango, monstera, muntingia, natal plum, papaya, passion fruit, pineapple, pitomba, sapodilla, Surinam cherry, and tamarind. Now is a good time to plant fruit trees. For those fruit trees that you just can't find and want to make a day of it, drive to Homestead. Pine Island Nursery, Turnpike to Eureka Drive, Exit 13, 16300 S.W. 184th Street, Miami. Lunch at Shivers B-B-Q, 28001 S. Dixie Hwy. and then to Alex's Fruit Trees, Alex Pinsky, 786-351-1521, 14000 S.W. 82 Ave. Krome Ave. and S.W. 136 St. if you can find it.

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