

APRIL

What to Plant . . . Annuals: Amaranthus, balsam, celosia, coleus, cleome, crossandra, dahlberg daisy, verbena, exacum, gaillardia, marigold, periwinkle, ornamental pepper, portulaca, purslane, rudbeckia, salvia, shrimp plant, torenia, zinnia; **Perennials:** Most can be planted year-round, or when available in the nurseries; **Herbs:** look for tropical varieties; keep others in shaded areas; **Bulbs:** Amazon lily, Aztec lily, Butterfly lily, caladium, canna, crinum, gloriosa lily, Kaffir lily, society garlic, spider lily.

What's Blooming . . . The **Jacaranda** tree.

What to Prune . . . Prune any plant to shape but cut the plant back by no more than one-third. Also, cut out any dead wood.

What to Fertilize . . . Continue to fertilize **palms** every three months.

What to Watch For . . . **Brown patch disease (Rhizoctonia fungus)** most frequently attacks lawns when the temperature is 80-85 degrees and the humidity is high. Look for circular areas of brown and dead grass surrounded by a narrow, dark ring. These usually start small and spread fast. To help prevent the disease, use a fertilizer with slow release nitrogen and mow less frequently during periods of hot, humid weather. Never “scalp” the lawn. Check St. Augustine lawns for **chinch bugs**. Sunny areas of the lawn are usually the first attacked. **Mole crickets** and grub feed on the turf roots. Treat mole crickets with bait, late in the day with they are most active.

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- Even if you fertilize your plants, **soil pH** affects how available that fertilizer is to the plant. Call or visit your county Extension Office to find out how you can have your soil tested for free. Know your plants' requirements and fertilize accordingly. Do not spend too much time trying to change soil pH; instead, use plants that are appropriate for the pH you have.
- Spray **roses** weekly for black spot, mites and thrips.
- It is normal for **citrus** to undergo several periods of fruit loss before fruit matures.
- All **sod** usually grows well this month so this is a good time for any necessary major **lawn** renovations. Water newly planted areas daily (if there is no rain) until runners develop or until the sod is well rooted. Fertilize every two weeks for faster coverage.
- Yellowing leaves on **citrus** are a sign of nutrient deficiency. Correct with a nutritional spray and use a granular fertilizer every four months.
- It is normal for the older leaves on a gardenia to yellow this time of year as the new growth and buds develop. The leaf yellowing and drop become more pronounced if the plant is allowed to become too dry or is subjected to some type of environmental stress, such as hot, dry, windy conditions or nematode damage. Normal leaf

yellowing occurs on the plants lower leaves. Usually, increasing the amount of water the plant receives and applying an acid forming fertilizer helps it overcome this condition. If the gardenia's new growth shows yellowing, this is an iron or manganese deficiency. This is corrected by fertilizing with a product blended for azaleas and gardenias, since they usually contain these essential minor elements.