

August

What to Plant . . . This is the ideal time to plant or transplant **palms** or plant new **fruit trees**. Keep watered daily for the first 2 to 4 weeks and then begin fertilizing fruit trees every 6-8 weeks. Start **vegetable seeds** to be planted in the garden in September and October. **Vegetable plants** that can go in the ground now include beans, cantaloupes, corn cucumber, eggplant, okra, pumpkin, tomato and watermelon.

What's Blooming . . .

What to Prune . . . Pruning **roses** now will not interrupt winter flowering. This pruning consists of removing some healthy top growth as well as twigs and branches that are dead, diseased, injured, unsightly or thin and spindly. Flowers can be expected again 8 to 9 weeks after pruning. Cut off old seed heads from **annuals** and **perennials** to encourage blooming. Lightly prune **poinsettias** for the last time to keep them on schedule for holiday blooming. Pruning later than early September results in small bracts (flowers) or none at all. If you have not already done so, be certain **trees** are cleaned of debris and dead limbs. Take off "waterspouts", cut out crossing branches and those growing in the center of the tree. Clean off small branches that clutter the center of the tree. Do any necessary heavy pruning of ornamentals now while they have the rest of the growing season in which to recover.

What to Fertilize . . . Continue to fertilize **palms** every three months with an 8-4-12 formulated "for palms". This should have the magnesium, manganese, iron and micronutrients that palms need.

What to Watch For . . . **Scale** insects can build up on citrus this time of year on foliage, limbs and trunks. They have hard shells that can be scratched off with a pocketknife. Scale feeds on the plant's sap and in large concentration can kill branches. Treat with a fine oil or horticultural oil spray. The **rust mite** causes a russetting of citrus peel. This is not harmful to the tree or fruit. The **orange dog caterpillar**, which look strangely like a bird dropping, may be evident this time of year. After munching on a few citrus leaves, this caterpillar turns into the giant swallowtail butterfly. **Snails** and **slugs** feed primarily on perennials such as Spathiphyllum and lilies and can be controlled with a slug/snail bait.

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- To green-up the **lawn**, use a low nitrogen/high potassium fertilizer such as 9-2-22, 6-0-15 or 12-2-24. Use a slow-release fertilizer with iron to keep the turf green without making it grow.

- If there has been a lot of rain following a dry period, some **citrus** fruit may be splitting. The thin skinned fruit varieties of oranges and tangerines are especially susceptible. This problem will resolve itself.
- Make the most of rainwater by directing downspouts and gutters away from hard surfaces. When possible, use this water for lawns or collect for watering plants.
- Plan now for your fall vegetable garden. Will you use raised beds or containers? How will they be watered? Consider using drip irrigation as a way of conserving water and reducing incidence of fungal disease.