

December in the Garden

What to Plant . . . *Annuals:* alyssum, baby's breath, calendula, cosmos, dianthus, dusty miller, geranium, impatiens, salvia, snapdragon, statice, strawflower, vinca, pentas, verbena; *Perennials:* salvia, chrysanthemum, coreopsis, daylily, gaillardia, gazania, yarrow; *Herbs:* chives, coriander, dill, fennel, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme; *Vegetables:* beans, beets, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chinese cabbage, collards, cucumbers, eggplant, endive/escarole, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley, peas, peppers, radish, spinach, tomatoes and turnips.

What's Blooming . . . Hong Kong orchid tree.

What to Prune. . . Hold off on any pruning until all danger of a frost has passed, about late February.

What to Fertilize . . . Continue fertilizing winter annuals, perennials and vegetables every 4-6 weeks.

What to Watch For . . . Mites cause a silver-grey discoloring on the upper surface of citrus leaves. This will not harm the quality of the fruit; however, if the population is high and they seem to be increasing, spray with

December Journal:

- **Cold weather:** If cold weather is predicted, water landscape plants ahead of time to help protect them. Keep sheets, boxes, baskets and buckets handy to cover cold sensitive plants on frosty nights. Do not leave these covers on the plants any longer than necessary and do not allow them to touch the plant. To be on the safe side, all orchids should be brought inside or protected against cold below 50 degrees. If a freeze does turn some plants brown, leave them until spring. Things may not be as bad as they seem. The dead parts actually help protect the living tissue until warmer weather arrives.
- *Poinsettias* need to be kept watered but not too wet. They do best where they will receive natural lighting or at least 14 hours of artificial light per day. *Christmas cacti and kalanchoes* perform best when kept on the cool side and watered every 2-3 weeks. Once they bloom, they will require a good deal of light but little water and no fertilizer. After the holidays, *Amaryllis* can be planted outside in full sun in a well-drained location. Water sparingly until new growth appears.
- Keep **St. Augustine grass** a little longer through the winter to help protect the exposed runners.

