

May in the Garden

What to Plant . . . Replace faded cool-weather annuals with heat-tolerant bedding plants if you have not already done so. Some to consider include amaranthus, celosia, coleus, crossandra, Dahlberg daisy, dahlia, gazania, impatiens, marigold, moss rose, nicotiana, pentas, portulaca, salvia, torenia, vinca and zinnia. Most will thrive if not in full sun. It is not too late to plant caladium bulbs for summer color.

What's in Bloom . . . The **Royal Poinciana**, with its large orange-red blossoms will begin to bloom this month.

What to Prune . . . Do not prune thryallis, ixora or oleander any later than this month. Continue to prune dead and diseased wood from other trees and shrubs.

What to Fertilize . . . Fertilize summer **annuals** with a balanced fertilizer such as 6-6-6 or 8-8-8 every three to four weeks. As an alternative, use slow-release fertilizer at the time of planting. Fertilize **gardenia** and **hibiscus** with a 15-5-10 or 15-5-15. Continue to fertilize palms with a good 8-4-12 palm fertilizer.

What to Watch For . . . Continue to inspect landscape plants regularly for any sign of insect damage. Remember that **lady bugs, praying mantis, assassin bugs, lacebugs, dragonflies, earwigs, ambush bugs, aphid lions and parasitic wasps** (these are very tiny, black wasps) are beneficial bugs – they feed on aphids, mites and others. **Oleander caterpillars** are their most active now. Use the biological control BT (Bacillus Thuringienus).

May Journal:

- This is probably the hottest, driest month of the year, making it the most stressful time for all plants, particularly lawn grasses. Give the turf as much water as the restrictions allow and wait patiently for the summer rains. Stress spots generally disappear when the rainy season begins.
- Check **King Sagos** for cycad scale. This begins as tiny white specks on the underside of fronds and can be controlled in the early stages by use of a horticultural oil spray.
- Flower buds on the ground around your **Gardenia** can indicate one of several problems: too much water, not enough water, or an insect called thrips. Gardenias require a fairly consistent moisture level in order to thrive.