

CENTRAL FLORIDA GARDENING CALENDAR JANUARY - MARCH PLANTING GUIDE

ANNUALS

- Set out seasonal annuals which are cold hardy in **January**: Calendula, Carnation, Pansy, Petunia, Snapdragon, and Statice.
- Warmer weather in **February** allows planting of Ageratum, alyssum, aster, baby's breath, Begonia, Browallia, Cosmos, Dusty miller, Gazania, Geranium, Hollyhock, Lobelia, Marguerite daisy, pansy, periwinkle, Petunia, snapdragon, and Verbena.
- Annuals for **March** planting include Ageratum, alyssum, Amaranthus, baby's breath, balsam (Impatiens), Celosia, calliopsis, dusty miller, Gaillardia, Gazania, Geranium, hollyhock, Lobelia, Marguerite daisy, marigold, Nicotiana, ornamental pepper, Pentas, periwinkle, Rudbeckia, Salvia, Streptocarpus, Sweet Williams, Thunbergia alata, Torenia, Verbena and Zinnia.
- Fertilize annuals during soil preparation and then monthly.

PERENNIALS AND BULBS

- Plant perennials in **January**: African lily, Amaryllis, Aztec lily, calla, Crinum, daylily, Dutch iris, Gloriosa lily, Gladiolus, hurricane lily, Ixia, Kaffir lily, Montbretia, Society garlic, spider lily, voodoo lily, walking iris, Watsonia, and zephyr lily.
- **February** planting of perennial bulbs includes African iris, blood lily, Caladium, Canna, Liliium, shell ginger, tiger flower, Potted flowering perennials can be planted any time of the year.

- Bulbs for **March**: African iris, Amazon lily, Aztec lily, tuberous Begonia, blood lily, Caladium, Canna, Crinum, Dahlia, Gloriosa lily, Kaffir lily, Montbretia, Shell Ginger, Society garlic, Spider lily, Tiger flower, Tuberose, Voodoo lily, Walking iris, Watsonia, and Zephyr lily.

COLD PROTECTION

- Plants with young tender shoots need protection from frost or freezing weather.
- Move outdoor house plants to warm locations when cold weather is predicted. Clean pots and leaves and control insects and diseases before moving plants inside or into greenhouse. Outdoor tropical plants (Schefflera, croton, Dieffenbachia, pothos, Philodendron) should be protected from temperatures below 55°F.
- Have boxes, blankets, hay, plastic, lights, etc. ready for early freeze protection. Cover plants during cold spells, but be sure to remove any clear plastic covering once sun is out, since the heat buildup can cook plants. Be sure protective cover goes all the way to the ground.
- Protect citrus from temperatures below 28°F. If banking with soil, be sure to cover the bud union with soil that is free of sticks, leaves and other organic matter. Avoid damage to trunks of trees as this can lead to disease and insect damage. Applying a fungicide registered for citrus before banking or wrapping tree trunks will help reduce foot rot disease.
- Do not prune cold damaged plants until all danger of frost is past (early **March**) and plants have begun to show signs of new growth.
- Continue to water plants as needed during dry winter months.

PRUNING

- If deciduous trees and shrubs need pruning, wait until after new growth begins to avoid cold damage to new growth which will follow. Ex. Sweet gum, maple, crape myrtle, elm, Chinese tallow, peach, apple, pear, pecan and persimmon.
- Prune the tips of azaleas and camellias soon after flowering to promote fullness.
- Prune summer or fall flowering shrubs (hibiscus, thryallis, plumbago, powderpuff, etc.) In late **February** or early **March** to promote flowering on new growth.
- Prune poinsettias and holiday mum plants before setting into the landscape.

FRUITS

- Plant bare root apple, peach, pear, pecan, persimmon and blueberries by late **February**. Do not fertilize at planting time.

VEGETABLES

- In **January**, plant: beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, collards, eggplant*, endive, escarole, lettuce, mustard, green onions, parsley, English peas, pepper* (Sweet and Hot), potatoes, radish, turnips, watermelon*.
(* - protect from frost).
- In **February**, in addition, plant beans, cantaloupes, celery, corn, cucumbers, kohlrabi, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, squash, Swiss chard, and tomatoes but protect from frost or late freeze.
- Wait until **March** to plant New Zealand spinach, okra, or southern peas. Safe to plant beans, beets, cantaloupes, carrots, collards, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, green onions, English peas, peppers, pumpkin, radish, squash, Swiss chard, tomatoes, turnips and watermelons.

- Start seeds of tender crops inside, and plant outside in **March** after all danger of frost is past.

LANDSCAPE

- In **January**, transplant shrubs and trees which were root pruned last summer.
- In **February**, root prune shrubs and trees to be transplanted next year.
- Fertilize landscape plants and fruit trees in late **February** using a general purpose fertilizer with slow release nitrogen. Use a rate of one pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet of lawn and landscape planting.
- Watch for scale insects which seem to multiply at the same time new growth is maturing. Monitor at least weekly for pests and disease problems.
- Use soap and oil sprays when soft insects war detected (scales, white fly, spider mites, thrips, aphids, mealy bugs). Use 2½ tablespoons each of liquid dish soap and vegetable oil in a gallon of water. Repeat spray in 5 days and then as needed.
- Apply crabgrass seed preventer in mid-**February** to keep seedlings from invading weak lawns.
- Calibrate fertilizer spreader to properly apply fertilizer each time a new brand is purchased.
- Check and repair sprinkler system. Calibrate sprinklers to apply about ¾" of water each time you water. Only water lawn when 30-40% of grass blades begin to wilt and turn blue/gray.

CITRUS

- Check citrus for ripeness by taste testing, not color. Varieties for **January** harvest include 'Navel', 'Parson Brown', and 'Pineapple' oranges, 'Temple' and 'Dancy' tangerine, tangelos, and grapefruit. Fruit doesn't ripen after picking. Over-ripe fruit will become dry and tasteless. By **March**, 'Valencia' should begin to sweeten.
- Fertilize in **February** or **March** with a citrus type fertilizer, using 1 pound of fertilizer per year of age of the tree. Spread evenly under branch spread.
- Keep weeds and grass away from the trunks of citrus.
- To prevent citrus scab on fruit, spray with benomyl or copper fungicide when 2/3 of the petals have fallen.