



MEADOW POINTE I

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Monthly Home & Garden Tips

January

- **Transplant cold hardy shrubs, trees** to same soil level. Do no pruning - plant will shed what it cannot support.
- **Prune deciduous (leaf-losing) fruit trees** and ornamental plants. Good time to prune Crape Myrtle.
- **Plant shade-tolerant ground cover** under trees (jasmine, ivies, monde grass).
- **Prune roses** before February 15th. Roses older than 1 year require a major pruning every year. Remove 1/3 to 1/2 top growth and any unproductive growth. Strip all leaves from remaining bush to rid plant of latent disease and insects.
- **Plants & lawns have reduced water needs in winter.** About 1/2 - 3/4 inch of water every 7 - 10 days or longer is sufficient for established lawns & landscape plants.
- **Plant deciduous fruit trees** (ones that lose their leaves in winter). Certain varieties of apples, blackberry, figs, peaches, pears and persimmons do well in central Florida. Contact County Extension Office for dependable varieties.

February

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- **Fertilize St. Augustine grass with 16-4-8** fertilizer (read label on bag for amount) either February or March. Use a weed and feed product only in the spring and fall.
- **St. Augustine lawn - Use insecticide every two months** to prevent infestation and severe damage from grubs, etc.
- **Fertilize trees, shrubs and fruit trees** once every 6-8 weeks. A balanced 10-0-10 fertilizer does a good job. Read instructions on fertilizer bag for amount.
- **Prune back all plants** that received frost damage.

March

- **Fertilize St. Augustine grass** with 16-4-8 fertilizer (read label on bag for amount) either February or March.
- **St. Augustine lawn - Use insecticide every two months** to prevent infestation and severe damage from grubs, etc. Armadillos and wild pigs will attack yards containing large numbers of grubs.
- **Fertilize trees, shrubs and fruit trees** once every 6-8 weeks. A balanced 10-0-10 fertilizer does a good job. Read instructions on fertilizer bag for amount.
- **Prune back all plants** that received frost damage.
- **Prune landscape plants** that require shaping and size reduction. Cut each branch separately with hand shears to maintain a naturally shaped shrub. Azaleas and gardenias should not be pruned until after they bloom.

- **Homemade pruning paint recipe** (2 ounces of any latex paint plus 1 tablespoon generic, Listerine type, mouthwash). Mix thoroughly. Paint on cut area with brush. Food coloring can be used in mixture to change paint color. Because cutting branches from a tree trunk leaves large unprotected areas, it is a good idea to paint those areas.
- **Pasco County Cooperative Extension Service** (996-7341) or Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension Service (813) 744-5519 can give residents great gardening advice and will send information on a variety of gardening subjects.



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April

- **Prune landscape plants** that require shaping and size reduction. Cut each branch separately with hand shears to maintain a naturally shaped shrub. Azaleas and gardenias should not be pruned until after they bloom.
- **Air conditioner filters** need to be cleaned (washable filters) or replaced (single use filters) once every few months. Write it on your calendar so you do not forget.
- **Pinch old blossoms off annuals.** To increase branching and flowering, remove one-half to one inch of tip growth from each stem. Flowering annuals produce blooms on new growth.
- **Wear gardening gloves** when working in the yard.
- **Carpet-grass** is similar to crabgrass. Since its growth is similar to St. Augustine grasses, it often goes unnoticed. At this time of year, it can be treated with environmentally friendly ARM & HAMMER Dry LAUNDRY DETERGENT (3 scoops thoroughly dissolved in 1 gallon of water). I used a one gallon sprayer to apply the product to carpet-grass, clover, and some other lawn weeds in the yard. Within 2 to 3 hours of spraying, all the above weeds began to wilt and die. After 2 days, all that was left of the weeds was a dark brown patch. The good news is the St. Augustine wasn't harmed. Retreatment will be required when new growth occurs. Caution: Use this treatment on a small patch first to be sure you understand the impact on your lawn. You may not have as much St. Augustine as you think.

May

- **Prune POINSETTIAS** to encourage dense, compact plant. Pinch several inches of tip growth off each branch. Repeat this procedure whenever new growth exceeds 12 inches.
- **Cut CHRYSANTHEMUMS** several times throughout growing season. Pinch tips when stems are 6 inches long.
- **Watch for signs of turf insects** - grubs, chinch bugs, mole crickets, and sod webworms. A Florida gardening book can help sort out turf problems.
- **Homemade insecticidal soap** for control of scales, mites - 2 1/2 tablespoons liquid dishwashing detergent and - 2 1/2 tablespoons vegetable oil to 1 gallon water. Spray tops and underside of leaves.
- **Water wisely.** Lawns need 1/2" to 3/4" of water (each irrigation period) when 30% to 50% of lawn shows signs of wilt (blue-gray color and folded blades).
 - a) April-May lawns should be watered approximately every 4 days.
 - b) Summer lawns should be watered approximately every 7 days.
 - c) Winter lawns should be watered every 7-14 days.
- **Raise the lawn mower blade to at least 3 inches** or the highest level. A high cut encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shade the root system and holds soil moisture better than a closely clipped lawn.
- **Plant mature and/or drought tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees.** Once established, they do not need water as frequently and usually will survive dry periods without water.
- **Ornamental plant and fruit trees** need only 1 inch of water per week.

June

- **Irrigate according to needs** of the plants. Ornamental plants and fruit trees need only 1 inch of water per week. Lawns need 1/2 to 3/4 inches of water when 30% to 50% of lawn shows signs of wilt (blue-gray color and folded blades). Place a few shallow cans or glasses in irrigated zone and measure how much your sprinklers apply. Adjust your timer schedule if necessary.
- **Fertilize plants approximately every 2 months.** Use insecticide every two months to prevent infestation and severe damage from grubs, etc. to the lawn.
- **Correct palm deficiencies.** Queen palms, paurotis palm and king sago frequently develops manganese deficiencies. Look for yellow, brown or distorted growth on new leaves. Foliar sprays of manganese sulfate (not magnesium sulfate) at a rate of 1 teaspoon per gallon of water, along with 1 pound of manganese sulfate applied to soil, will correct this deficiency on the new growth.
- **Prune lightly to shape plants** and encourage branching. Never remove more than 1/3 of the plants foliage at a time.
- **Remove old flowers** to encourage buds on flowering plants.
- Raise the lawn mower blade to at least 3 inches or the highest level. A high cut encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shade the root system and holds soil moisture better than a closely clipped lawn.
- **Treat carpet grass** (See April) if needed.
- **Never use Florida lime rock** as landscape material. Lime rock will kill most plants. Stick with river rock, granite, marble, etc.



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July

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- **Fertilize St. Augustine grass** this month with 16-4-8 fertilizer (DO NOT USE A WEED AND FEED PRODUCT - the temperature is too high in the Summer months).
- **Spread insecticide granules every 2 months** to decrease turf insects like grubs, cinch bugs, etc.
- **Air conditioner filters need to be cleaned** (washable filters) or replaced (single use filters) once every few months. Write it on your calendar so you don't forget!
- **Prune azaleas** for the last time this year since flower buds will form soon.
- **Mow grass often** enough so that no more than 1/3 of the blade height is removed per mowing. Leave clippings on the lawn to recycle nutrients, or use clippings as mulch.
- **Cut back poinsettias and chrysanthemums** several times through the growing season. Poinsettias - pinch it back a few inches when it is 12 inches or longer. Chrysanthemums - pinch tips when stems are 6 inches long.
- **Remove old blossoms and seed-pods** of flowering plants to encourage more blooms.

August

- **Fertilize plants** approximately every two months (you can use a balanced fertilizer like 10-0-10).
- **Lightly prune poinsettias** for the last time. Flower buds start to form in October. Pruning after September 10th will result in small flowers or none at all.
- **Remove old flowers and seed heads** from crape myrtle, annuals (plants that live only one season), and perennials (plants that live for several years) to encourage blooming.
- **Prune rose bushes** to enhance fall bloom. Remove dead and dying twigs. Cut back excessively long canes. This is a neatening process, not a major pruning. Spray roses for black spot disease (dark, round spots with yellow halos followed by dropping leaves. Triforine (Funginex) is an effective fungicide for black spot and powdery mildew disease.
- **Palm care - apply magnesium sulfate** (Epsom salts) to palms to correct yellowing of folded fronds. One to five pounds should be applied depending on the size of the palm.
- **Homemade insecticidal soap** for control of scales, mites - 2 1/2 tablespoons liquid dish detergent plus 2 1/2 tablespoons vegetable oil in 1-gallon water. Spray mixture on tops and underside of leaves.
- **Wear gardening gloves** while working in the yard!

September

- **You can get great gardening advice** from either Pasco County Cooperative Extension Service (996-7341) or Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension Service (813-744-5519). The master gardeners are very helpful and will gladly send you information on a variety of subjects (grasses, citrus, perennials, annuals, trees, etc.). JUST GIVE THEM A CALL!
- **Fertilize lawn in September or October.** Use 16-0-8 fertilizer or weed and feed product for St. Augustine grass. Inspect lawn for insect pests, fungus, etc.
- **Inspect sprinkler system** for broken, clogged or misdirected sprinklers. A little maintenance goes a long way!
- **Divide herbaceous perennials and bulbs.** Amaryllis, cannas day lilies, Shasta Daisies and other perennials can be lifted, divided and reset. Give plenty of space for future growth.
- **Annuals** are great, but they usually last only one season. **Perennials**, on the other hand, can last many years with care. It is amazing just how fast a small plant will grow - so buy small (or adopt from your friends and neighbors).



Monthly Home & Garden Tips

October

- **Ants or Roaches in your house?** Mix 1-teaspoon boric acid powder and 1/4 teaspoon sugar together. Spread evenly onto flat plastic lid (margarine lid). Place where critters are noticed (some out of the way places include under refrigerator or stove). Keep out of reach of children and pets!!! Boric acid powder can be found at gardening centers.
- **Air Conditioner Filters** need to be cleaned (washable filters) or replaced (single use filters) once every few months. Write it on your calendar so you do not forget. Especially important for those with asthma, allergies or other respiratory problems.
- **If you have not fertilized the St. Augustine grass in September**, be sure to do it in October. Use 16-4-8 fertilizer or weed and feed product.
- **Irrigate according to needs** of the plants. Ornamental plants and fruit trees need only 1 inch of water per week. Lawns need 1/2 to 3/4 inches of water when 30-50% of lawn shows signs of wilt (blue - gray color and folded blades). Place a few shallow cans or glasses in irrigated zone and measure how much water your sprinklers apply in 30 minutes. During dry season, watering the lawn twice per week for 30 minutes (each zone) should be adequate. During rainy season, like now, you may not need to water unless you just spread fertilizer.

November

- **Reduce irrigation frequency**, as weather cools, to once every 7 to 10 days. Check to see that sprinklers are working properly.
- **Plant containerized roses.** Buy roses grafted on Fortuniana or Dr. Huey rootstocks and plant them at the same depth as they were in containers. Remember, roses are a challenge to the Florida gardener. It is a good idea to start out with one or two to see how things go.
- **Plant cold-hardy landscape plants.** Fall is for planting. Cold-hardy trees and shrubs establish well during cooler months.
- **Divide and reset perennials and bulbs** such as day lilies, gerbera daisies and caladiums.
- **Wear those gardening gloves** while gardening.
- **Fertilize plants and trees** with a balanced fertilizer (6-0-6, 8-0-8) about every 2 months.

December

- **Reduce irrigation frequency**, as weather cools, to once every 7 to 10 days. Check to see that sprinklers are working properly.
- **Pointsettias and Mums** purchased for holiday beautification can be kept outside on the porch (be sure to keep them watered). In February, plant them in the ground and water every other day until well established (takes about 3 weeks). Cut Mum's old flowers off. Fertilize plants with 6-0-6 balanced fertilizer every two months.
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- **Homemade Insecticide Soap Recipe** - 2 1/2 teaspoons liquid dish detergent and 2 1/2 tablespoons vegetable oil in 1-gallon water. Mix well. Spray mixture on tops and undersides of leaves (for control of scales, mites, etc.)
- **Pasco County Cooperative Extension Service** (996-7341) or **Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension Service** (813) 744-5519 can give residents great gardening advice and will send information on a variety of gardening subjects.