

May Checklist

Citrus: Depending on citrus fertilizer label, apply fertilizer every six weeks or as directed. Check for citrus insects; apply insecticidal soap when insects are present, which can be purchased at most local garden centers. We prefer you use this product as does not harm important pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Make any applications before 10 am and in early evening once insects are detected. We would recommend purchasing the soap rather than making your own as the new dish soaps are degreasers and can damage leaves. Check for disease; apply fungicide just at new leaf flush or after flower petal drop. Maintain 2-3' unmulched area around citrus trees.

Fruit: Weed as needed because weeds can harbor insects and disease. Apply 6-6-6 or 8-8-8 fertilizer if appropriate. Check irrigation to ensure it is working, consistent irrigation is critical for fruit formation. Do not overwater.

Flowers: Annuals to plant this month are celosia, coleus, coreopsis, crossandras, gaillardias, gazanias, hollyhocks, impatiens, kalanchoe, marigolds, nicotianas, ornamental peppers, pentas, portulacas, salvia, thunbergia alata, torenias, verbenas, periwinkles, and zinnias.

Herbs: Anise, basil, bay laurel, borage, caraway, cardamom, chervil, chives, coriander, culantro, dill, ginger, horehound, lemon balm, lavender, marjoram, Mexican tarragon, mint, parsley, oregano, rosemary, sesame, and thyme can be planted now.

Roses: Continue spray program. Water, water, water. May 15, apply liquid fertilizer. Cut and remove spent blooms. Check for spider mites.

Lawns: Check St. Augustine for chinch bugs. It is the beginning of mole cricket season for bahia, Bermuda, and zoysia lawns. The mole crickets have been busy laying eggs which will start hatching this month. Water restrictions (city water or wells) allow odd numbered houses to water Wednesday & Saturday; even numbered houses – Thursday & Sunday. Nonresidential properties water on Tuesday & Friday.

Trees: Some magnolias, oleander and hibiscus may drop their leaves during the spring months. This is normal, as they replenish foliage. Mature trees really do not require fertilization. If adding new mulch remember to remove old mulch. Do not allow mulch to touch the trunk of any tree or shrub.

Vegetables: Scout for insects and hand remove if possible. Check the underside of younger leaves for eggs and aphids. Remember some insects are predators. These predators are an important part of keeping the pests from totally taking over vegetables.

Vegetables to plant this month are lima beans, eggplant, okra, Southern peas, and sweet potatoes.

Selected from Florida Vegetable Guide by JM Stephens, RA Dunn, G Kidder, D Short, & GW Simone, University of Florida and Month-by-Month Gardening in Florida by Tom MacCubbin

