

## May Gardening

Sally Scalera

The warm and sunny weather of May makes it ideal for gardening and after the cool, short days of winter it is a pleasure to work out in the yard now. After all, when the weather is nice, who wants to stay inside!

- \* Keep an eye out for chinch bug damage. If you see areas of the lawn that go to a tan or brown color and continue to grow larger start looking for chinch bugs.

- \* Check for chinch bugs where the green grass borders the brown area. Just part the grass and look for them on the soil or grass. If you find them, then apply a spot treatment to the infested area and a border three to four feet wide around it.

- \* Re-seed established bahia lawns with three to five pounds of Argentine bahia seed per 1,000 square feet to create a thicker lawn. Be sure to buy scarified seed for better germination.

- \* Replace winter flowers with heat loving flowers.

- \* Some flowers for full sun include: wax begonias, celosia, coleus, gaillardia, lisianthus, marigolds and gomphrena.

- \* In other sunny areas consider planting vinca, portulaca, purslane, salvia, sunflowers, gazania, melampodium or zinnias.

- \* In shady areas plant; coleus, impatiens, rex begonias, angle wing begonias or crossandra.

- \* Complete the pruning of azaleas, gardenias and camellias this month.

- \* Remove dead and diseased wood and sucker growth from trees and shrubs.

- \* Herbs that can be planted this month include; basil, chives, dill, sage, rosemary, mint, sweet marjoram and thyme.

- \* Don't forget to give citrus trees one inch of water every 7-10 days if your yard doesn't receive one inch of rain.

- \* Go out and buy a rain gauge if you don't already own one. The wider the opening at the top the better!

- \* Protect young papaya fruits from fruit flies by placing a brown paper bag over each fruit immediately after the faded flower falls off.

- \* Add compost and/or manures to the garden and plant beds.

- \* Harvest maturing vegetables to keep the plants producing.

- \* Replant spent vegetable plants with summer crops such as; calabaza, cherry tomatoes, chayote, jicama, malabar spinach, collards, okra, Seminole pumpkin, Southern peas, sweet potatoes, purple hyacinth bean and winged beans.

\* Trellis climbing crops, such as chayote, malabar spinach, purple hyacinth bean and winged beans, to keep the fruit off the ground.

\* Pinch several inches of tip growth off each branch of poinsettias to encourage a dense, compact plant.

\* Bulbs that you can add to your garden this month include; Amazon lily (*Eucharis* spp.), agapanthus, Aztec lily (*Sprekelia formosissima*), blood lily (*Haemanthus multiflorus*), caladium, crinum, shell lily (*Alpinia zerumbet*), gladiolus, gloriosa lily, rain lilies, society garlic (*Tulbaghia violacea*) and spider lily (*Hymenocallis* spp.).

\* Start a compost pile.