

November tips.

It's that time of year again. Hopefully, cooler weather is around the bend. We're also approaching our dry season. In November, South Florida gardeners have lots to do as we prepare our gardens and yards for the winter months ahead.

As long as temperatures don't exceed 85', it is now safe to use most weed and feed remedies for the lawn. Follow the directions on the label of your product. Keep in mind, that it isn't necessary to have a high concentration of Nitrogen, the first number in a set of three found on the bag. 15 should be plenty. If your weeds are excessive, don't think putting more down will help, always wait between applications. Again check the directions. I wouldn't want anyone to kill their lawn. Pay attention to any new forming brown spots, and or discolorations on your lawn. These indications could mean anything from insect, fungus, and or too much or too little water. With any application, make certain your sprinklers are in working order. If I hear about upcoming wet weather, I try to apply my lawn materials before the storm.

Early November is also a good time to significantly trim your shrubs. Remember that later on with a chance of a frost, the cold damage and a trim, can set a plant or shrub up for failure. Plants, fruit trees, flowering shrubs can all benefit from fertilizer now. Try using a time release formula, one with micro nutrients. Never apply fertilizer directly on exposed roots, along the main trunk or stem of any plant. Fertilizer can burn a plant easily. Consider applying fertilizer in the same manner as casting feed for chickens. Don't forget that roots extend outward from the center of the plant to the drip line of its leaves.

Lastly, mulch. Mulch helps keep weeds at bay. Mulch can warm the soil, and as it decomposes enrich the soil. How deep should one mulch? 3-4 inches deep. Once your beds are established, mulch will last longer and you won't have to use as much.

Just a note regarding our community to assist in keeping rodents away. Please pick up any fruit that fall to the ground, dispose of it, or bury it to use as fertilizer. To save money on fertilizer, you can bury coffee grinds, egg shells, fruit and salad waste. I had a neighbor who left a trowel in the yard as a marker from where she last buried her vegetable discards. She kept a plastic bag near the sink in the kitchen to collect the scraps. Make certain there is at 2 inches of soil on top your discards in the ground. As you redefine a planting bed border, try using the discards as fertilizer. Remember, do not bury left over salad that has dressing on it, or any meat or animal products.

Happy Gardening, Joy Schwartz