

## May Monthly Reminders



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

Cooperative  
Extension

Pima County -Master Gardener Program

### **Planting**

- Plant heat-loving flowers such as moss rose, gaillardia, zinnia, Madagascar periwinkle, verbena, celosia and salvia, as well as desert-adapted perennials such as autumn sage, gaura, and bulbine.
- Plant and transplant cacti, agaves, palms, and other heat-loving plants such as desert trees. Warm weather helps generate new roots. Plant so that the top set of roots is located at or just below the soil surface.
- Plant seeds of cantaloupe, cucumber, peppers, watermelon, and summer squash.

### **Fertilizing**

- At the end of the month, fertilize citrus using a high nitrogen fertilizer (21-0-0). Evenly spread it under the tree, starting one foot from the trunk and continuing out several feet past the end of the branches. Water the fertilizer into the soil immediately after applying. If young leaves remain yellow, apply chelated iron to the soil following label directions.
- Fertilize palms using a special "palm fertilizer" available at garden centers and follow label directions. Fertilizers should be broadcast under the canopy of the tree, but not against the trunk. Make a second application in July.

### **Watering**

- May is one of the hottest and driest months of the year, often with hot, dry winds; plants need more frequent irrigation to keep them healthy. Adjust your irrigation, but instead of longer watering times, increase frequency of application.
- Vegetable and flower gardens may require daily watering. Lawns should be irrigated every three days. Non-desert trees and shrubs will need a good soaking every 7-10 days. Use a soil probe to assure water is getting down 24-36". Desert-adapted trees and shrubs may require a soaking irrigation this month to prevent drought stress. Water slowly to prevent run-off.
- Hose off overheated plants, especially newly planted ones, between noon and 2 p.m. Let the hose run first until the water is cool.

### **Maintenance**

- Spray Italian cypress, juniper and other evergreens as well as roses and pyracanthas with a strong jet of water to remove spider mites. Yellowing needles or leaves and fine webbing are the first signs of spider mite damage. Do this weekly in May and June.
- Leaf-cutter bees may cut circles in the new leaves of tender plants such as roses and bougainvilleas. While unsightly, it does not harm the plant and no action is necessary.