



January 1st, 2011

We hope everyone had a safe and happy new year and we wish you a great 2011!

LIVING CHRISTMAS TREES

When making the transition from indoor to outdoor, place the tree outside in a cool shady area and water once a week. Do this for two weeks and then plant the tree in the desired spot. You can also donate your living tree to your town or city if you do not have the space to plant it in your own yard.

FROST PROTECTION

With the very cold nights we have had, you may start to see frost damage on some of your frost tender plants. Although aesthetically it may not be appealing don't make the mistake of pruning any damaged wood until the second half of February into early March. If pruning is done now to remove frost damage and we continue to have more freezing temperatures, you will run the risk of losing the plant.

LAWNS

Water your rye grass once a week for 10 to 15 minutes. If we continue to get rain consistently, go ahead and turn your system off until the rain patterns have stopped. Fertilize your rye with Calcium Nitrate every 4 to 6 weeks to keep your lawn deep green. If you chose to let your Bermuda go dormant, water your lawn once a month unless it rains. If it rains, then watering is not needed.

WEED CONTROL

Get on top of killing those pesky weeds before it is too late. They are much easier to handle while they are young, tender, and their roots don't have a strong hold in the soil quite yet. When buying a weed killer, do not be fooled into buying inexpensive controls that can sterilize your soil. For weeds in gravel areas we recommend using any product containing Diquat, which is an effective weed killer in the cold weather for all types of weeds. If you have weeds in your lawn we recommend Fertilome® Weed-Free Zone. This product contains four ingredients that kill tough weeds in Bermuda and Rye and is rain fast in just three hours.

WATERING

With all of the rain we have been having, you may consider turning your system off. You can take advantage of the rain by lowering your water bill and conserving water.

TREES

January is a great time to plant and prune any deciduous trees, such as Ash, Chinese Pistache, and fruit trees. While these trees are dormant you can thin out and remove any unnecessary branches. We recommend using Bonide® Pruning Sealer after making any cuts to protect the tree from insect and disease.

ROSES

Now is the time to cut back rose bushes so they will bloom nicely in the spring. Prune the canes back half way and remove any dead or weak canes. Be sure to use Bonide® Pruning Sealer to protect the plant.

VEGETABLES

The following seeds can still be planted: beets, bok choy, carrots, chard, collard greens, leeks, lettuce, mustard, green onions, peas, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, spinach and turnips. The following can still be transplanted: artichokes, asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, chard, and lettuce.

PLANT OF THE MONTH – Valentine Emu (*Eremophila maculata* Valentine™) – This drought tolerant shrub showcases beautiful red blossoms during the winter lasting well into spring. In January, when most plants in your landscape are doing nothing, Valentine Emu displays its bright red blooms. This shrub mixes great with commonly used Texas Sage or is a nice alternative to it. It is moderate to fast growing and will mature to 4' to 5' tall and wide and can be sheared to any size. Valentine Emu performs well in full sun and can tolerate reflected sun.

TREE OF THE MONTH – Southern Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*) – This beautiful shade tree grows at a moderate pace, eventually growing to a large size. Live Oak has deep green foliage and a dense canopy. Southern Live Oak tolerates both the extreme cold and heat. It makes a great lawn tree, but can also mix well with desert landscaping.