



**ACORN
NURSERY**

PLANTS - GIFTS - CAFE

TONY'S TIPS

JANUARY

SUMMER COLOUR



Many plants thrive in a warmer, drier environment and prefer to be planted at this time. Jacarandas (late this year but still beautiful) & Crepe Myrtles would much rather be planted in January than June as would a Fig, Pomegranate, or Persimmon tree, a Plumbago, Convolvulus or Agapanthus. As long as support watering is there they are able to move forward and establish themselves instead of shivering and regressing through winter. Vincas thrive in the heat & although slow to start are now doing very well! Basil, tomatoes, chillies etc are finally looking great. As long as support watering is there they are able to move forward & establish themselves instead of shivering & regressing through winter.

THINGS TO DO IN JANUARY

Catmint, Gaura, some Salvias, Heliotrope as well as shrubs like Fuchsias and especially Hydrangeas greatly appreciate a prune at the start of the hotter, drier weather to help them cope through a stressful time. We prune our Hydrangeas any time after Christmas but before Australia Day, so they will cope with Summer better, but most importantly flower earlier in the season when the weather is kinder and the flowers last longer. Either prune before going away on holidays or stagger the pruning over a month so that it doesn't look all bare all at once.

- Keep pruning roses regularly to remove spent flowers with 20cm-30cm of stem and feed to promote new strong growth and re-flowering within 6-7 weeks.
- If you haven't already treated your garden to a wetting agent (Saturaid) and mulch (any good one) then do so now. Treat your fruiting vegies to a dose of high Potash complete fertilizer i.e. G.B. Fruit and Citrus to help them make up lost ground and aid fruit production.
- Watch out for dead patches and magpies/crows digging in lawns. A sure sign of lawn beetle grubs hatching late this year. Treat early to avoid major damage requiring major reparations.
- As flowers of English lavender turn to seed, prune them back hard; leaving some of the viable lowest foliage but not pruning to bare wood. Lavenders are poor at shooting from the bare wood; they need some foliage to draw the sap up to stimulate new growth from old buds. Prune French Lavender now. They can flower all year around but are at the lowest ebb of their growth cycle in summer so a prune now ensures valuable flowers in Autumn, Winter and Spring.
- Lightly prune new growth of Sasanqua Camellias to shape. They are already forming Autumn flowers so a hard prune cuts off the growing flower buds and stimulates growth at the expense of flowers. The same holds for Azaleas; gentle and subtle pruning.
- Winter flowering natives often enjoy a light clip at this time of year to shape and consolidate growth ensuring greater flowering through the cooler months.
- I am a big believer in a light to moderate prune of Peaches, Nectarines, Plums and Apricots after fruiting. It can be as simple as a hedge clipper prune over the top to remove much of the spring growth and encourage bushier, more fruitful growth as a result.
- If you have been away and the garden dried out the plants will have retreated into shock or defence mode. What you need to do is firstly water, water, water, and then a stimulus like Plantstarter, Seasol, Maxicrop etc and then an organic (gentle) fertilizer like Blood & Bone or Pelletised Organic. This will convince the plants that the bad stuff is over and that good times are here again and that it is okay to come out and play! Do nothing and the plants will stay in shock until at least late Autumn or wait until Spring before moving forward. What most people call "burnt" foliage is actually dehydrated foliage i.e. not enough water to keep it hydrated in hot weather results in crispy foliage.