

Omaha Metro Area, the EARTH-KIND® Center of the Midwest

By

Joanne Langabee

Master Gardener, Consulting Rosarian, & EARTH-KIND® Specialist

Omaha Metro Area truly is the EARTH-KIND® Center of the Midwest. In the Omaha Metro area there are five sites having flower beds planted in the EARTH-KIND® Manner, six EARTH-KIND® test beds and an EARTH-KIND® pre-test bed.

The sites planted in the EARTH-KIND® Manner are the Ford Birth Place, Joslyn Castle, Memorial Park, Douglas/Sarpy County Extension Office, and Haworth Park, all planted in 2007. The sixth site is the Hospice Center planted in the spring of 2008. At the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Rose Garden there are EARTH-KIND® Test Roses along with Easy Elegance Roses. Joslyn Castle has planted 120 roses and numerous perennials. Memorial Park has 98 Easy Elegance Roses planted by the cement planter and another 150 Easy Elegance roses planted by the flagpole. Douglas/Sarpy County Extension Office has planted some of the Griffith Buck Roses in their beds. Haworth Park has 4 demonstration beds containing additional roses, annuals and perennials. The Hospice Center has planted 27 roses.

The two largest test beds are located at Haworth Park in Bellevue, NE. Garden One, located by the marina, contains the 30 EARTH-KIND® Brigade Roses which were planted in the spring of 2007, plus 6 cultivars of the 20 Northern Test Roses which were planted in the fall of 2007. The 20 Northern Test Roses located by the Missouri River were planted in the fall of 2007 and the spring of 2008. Lauritzen Gardens is the third site in the immediate Omaha Metro Area. It has 6 cultivars that are being testing; Carefree Beauty, Earth song, Dorcus, Summer Wind, Prairie Harvest and Freckles. All the roses were planted in 2007.

The roses at both Haworth Park and Lauritzen Gardens have also been tested for other extreme conditions besides the EARTH-KIND® tests of NO fertilizer, NO spraying, NO watering once established, NO deadheading, and NO winter protection. The beds at Haworth Park had many of the Rose Brigade roses under water for 7 days while the Northern Cultivars by the Missouri River were covered with mud up to 18 inches in the flood of 2008. All the roses that were under water survived and flourished. Most of the roses that were covered by mud survived but were stunted or dug up and planted in pots for the rest of the year. This spring, 2009, the Northern Cultivars roses will be transplanted to a higher location in Haworth that usually does not flood. The 30 Rose Brigade roses and the 6 Northern Cultivars will not be moved. At Lauritzen the roses were stripped of their leaves by hail and 85-115 mph winds in the June 27, 2008 storm. The EARTH-KIND® roses rebounded back and by the end of the year were some of the best looking roses in the garden.

A fourth EARTH-KIND® test site is located at Glenwood, IA. The roses were planted in the spring of 2008 around the clock tower in the town square. The roses planted were Belinda's Dream, Carefree Beauty, Dorcus, Prairie Breeze and Quietness.

The last two test sites are located at Tekamah, NE. One site is located in the city park on the north edge of Tekamah along U.S. Hwy. 75. The roses planted at this test site are Prairie Harvest, Quietness, Freckles, Sea Foam, Hi Neighbor and Winter Sunset. The second site is at the Lydick Farm near Tekamah, NE. The roses planted at this site are Winter Sunset, Summer wind, Quietness, Prairie Princess and April Moon.

The Haworth Park and Lauritzen Garden sites are located in Zone 4/5. The Glenwood, IA and Tekamah, NE sites are zone 4. Our winters can get down to -15 to -20 degrees Fahrenheit and summers can reach well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Definitely, harsh growing

conditions, that require extremely hardy roses to be able to survive the winter and disease resistant to tolerate the heat. So far none of the roses have died. Many of the roses did get blackspot but were able to produce new leaves and buds and did not seem to be affected by the disease.

This coming year Bellevue will be putting in another rose bed at Everett Park. The roses are being provided by Dr. David Zlesak of the University of Minnesota. The roses will be evaluated to see if they should be included in the next round of testing for the Northern EARTH-KIND® roses.

Yes, the Omaha Metro Area is the EARTH-KIND® Center of the Midwest having the largest test site outside of Texas testing both the 30 EARTH-KIND® Brigade Roses and the 20 Northern Test Cultivars at Haworth Park and having 4 smaller test sites at other locations. Then the area has 6 sites planted in the EARTH-KIND® manner which shows how successful the EARTH-KIND® Manner is when applied to planting any plant. Our area definitely has something to be proud of and the right to call this area the EARTH-KIND® Center of the Midwest.