

Bell County Master Gardener
Tip of the Week
by Mary Lew Quesinberry
“EarthKind and Other Easy Roses”

Martha Gonzales is a "found" red China rose. It grows 2-4 feet in height, blooms most of the year and is mostly evergreen. It makes a lovely hedge, specimen plant, or can be grown in a pot. It is trouble-free with no pest or disease problems. Other easy to grow roses are the designated EarthKind roses. These roses have been through statewide testing by the Texas A&M University Agricultural program. Roses that are given this distinction have been found to be disease and insect resistant. They require minimal care and will grow in most regions and soil types in Texas.

The selection of EarthKind roses is growing (Belinda's Dream, Caldwell Pink, Carefree Beauty, The Fairy, Sea Foam, and more). Knockout Roses (Red, Pink, Sunny, Blushing, Double, Rainbow and others) are hardy, low maintenance, disease resistant, and very desirable in the garden.

Roses do best when they receive 8 hours of sun per day. When planting roses elevate the rose roots so that it receives good drainage. Incorporate 3 inches of compost and 3 inches of expanded shale or decomposed granite in the soil mix. After planting, water and add three inches of mulch. Take care not to water the leaves. Fertilize with nitrogen at least twice a year, once in the spring and again in the fall.

Valentine's Day is the traditional time to prune your roses. If you have hybrid tea roses, prune back to about 24 inches in height.

Climbing roses are not pruned until after blooming. Antique roses and EarthKind roses are simply shaped as needed for the landscape. Remove any dead or diseased canes and branches that rub against each other.

Learn about the EarthKind horticultural techniques and concepts at <http://earthkind.tamu.edu>.

For questions contact ask.bcmga@gmail.com.



In the photo: Robin Hood Rose (Mediterranean Musk Rose) has clusters of fragrant, long-lasting blooms. It blooms up to 6 months a year, reaching 4-6 feet in height and has a graceful growing habit. It requires no special care. Robin Hood is not bothered by disease or insects and has a wonderful fragrance!