

What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

May 2004

Vol. 4, Iss. 4

At the Meeting:

Congratulations to the Graduates - The Spring 2003 Interns graduated at our May meeting. Congrats to our new Master Gardeners:

Barbara Bruyere
Kathy Walton

Barbara Greeley
Robert Brown

Frances Mount
Henry Willis

DiAnna Munson

Open House - Plans are in the works for our **Open House on June 5**. We need as many people as possible to be there. More info below - in 2 places, so read everything!

State Conference - Eleven BCMGA members attended the State Conference at Corpus Christi, and they had a great time. John Alcorn recommends that everyone who possibly can attend next year's conference. It will be held in Denton on May 5: 5-5-05.

Plant Sale - Okay - the news you've all been waiting for. Ted announced that the Spring Plant Sale grossed a little over \$10,000. We netted around \$7,500, which is \$4,500 more than last year. WAY TO GO!!!!

Scholarship Committee - The money received from Brazosport College for the classes which were presented by BCMGA members this spring will go to our scholarship fund. The Scholarship Committee is working on an application to use to award scholarships to BCMGA members for advanced training. Examples of training which would qualify are the propagation, entomology and landscaping seminars which have been offered in the past or are upcoming. Members who receive scholarships will be required to payback with volunteer time.

Brazosport College Classes - Speaking of scholarship money, we have another opportunity from Brazosport College which will allow us to increase our scholarship fund by the \$750 which would be received from the College. It has been requested that we do another series for the fall. **Keep on reading- details are on down farther.**

Presentation Skills Workshop - If you would like to be a presenter but feel like you need some training on presentation skills, Kathy Walton has offered to have a summer workshop to help out with this. Please let Kathy know if you are interested in attending.

How About Some Computer Training? - John Alcorn has offered to put together a digital camera class and a computer training class. Those interested should contact John and let him know.

At the Demonstration Gardens:

June Open House - Plans are in the works for our **Open House on June 5**. We need as many people as possible to be there.

Refreshments will be served - beverages and cookies. John has requested that all BCMGA members who attend please bring cookies for us to serve to our guests. (If you want to bring a pie or cake for John, he would be very grateful!)

Tours of the gardens will be given. Please contact Don Gerard by email or phone if you would like to give tours of one of the flowerbeds.

The Vegetable Show will be held in the barn. Entries will be taken from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.; Judging will be from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. For rules, call the Extension Office 979-864-1558, 979-388-1558 or 281-756-1558 or visit the BCMGA website: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/brazoria> .

The Farmers Market will take place every weekend in June from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. It will be set up both inside the barn and on the driveway in front of the barn. Feel free to bring any fruits, veggies, eggs, canned or homemade items to sell.

Mowing - Thanks to Perry Wollam for mowing the tall, tall grass at the Demonstration Gardens!

Work Days - Tuesdays and Fridays from 7:30/8:00 a.m. until noon.

Mark your calendars for these

June work days:

June 1

June 11

June 22

June 4

June 15

June 25

June 8

June 18*

June 29

*Third Friday

Calendar of Events:

**see below for details*

new items in bold

2004 Dates:

June 1: Tee-Budding Citrus and Other Fruits
June 3: Hurricane Preparation Seminar*
 June 5: Brazoria County Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens Open House
 June 5: Brazoria County Farmers Market
 June 5: Brazoria County Vegetable Show
June 5: Water Gardening with Nature*
 June 8: June Meeting
 June 8: Gardening, Cooking, and Living Chinese Vegetables
June 9: Lunch Bunch: First Aid For Trees*
 June 12: Brazoria County Farmers Market
June 12: Summer Plant Sale*
June 12: Going Buggy*
 June 13: Hibiscus Show
 June 14: How to Start a Community Garden
 June 15: Growing the Latino Vegetables
 June 18: Third Friday
 June 19: Brazoria County Farmers Market
June 19: Wild Edibles*
June 19: Urban Tree Pests Workshop*
June 19: Drip Irrigation*
 June 21: How to Start a Community Garden
 June 22: Oko to Agbo: From the Garden Plot to the Medicine Pot
June 22: Wonders of the Insect World*
June 23: Native Plant Gardening 101 begins*
 June 26: Brazoria County Farmers Market
 June 29: Cooking and Growing with Vegetables of India

July 1: Gardening with Nature*

July 13: July Meeting
 July 18: Hibiscus Show
 July 23: Third Friday
 August 10: August Meeting
 August 20: Third Friday
 Sept 14: September Meeting
 Sept 17: Third Friday
 Sept 18: Fall Plant Sale
 Oct 12: October Meeting
 Oct 22: Third Friday
 Nov 9: November Meeting
 Nov 19: Third Friday
 Dec 14: December Meeting
 Dec 17: Third Friday

2005 Dates:

Jan 11: January Meeting
Feb 8: February Meeting
Mar 8: March Meeting
Apr 12: April Meeting
May 5: State MG Conference
May 10: May Meeting
June 14: June Meeting
July 12: July Meeting
Aug 9: August Meeting
Sept 13: September Meeting
Oct 11: October Meeting
Nov 8: November Meeting
Dec 13: December Meeting

Hurricane Preparation Seminar - The Perfect Storm Preparation: A Seminar for the Public to Safely Prepare for Hurricanes; Date: June 3; Times - 2:30 - Exhibits open to public; 3:30 - Poster Contest Awards (Student Artwork); 4:30 - Presentation "The Hurricane Risk to Brazoria County" by Dr. Billy Edge ; Location: Lake Jackson Civic Center. Helicopters and Emergency Vehicles will be on display. Door Prizes will be given

throughout the seminar. Exhibitors interested in booth space, please contact Sandra at the Extension Office 864-1564, ext. 112.

Water Gardening with Nature - Date: June 5; Time: 11:00 a.m.; Location: Martha's Bloomers, 8101 Highway 6 Navasota; Phone: 936-870-4111. Presented by Karen Breneman.

Lunch Bunch: First Aid For Trees - Date: June 9; Time: 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Join local landscape expert Bill Hynek for a discussion and helpful hints for healthy trees. Learn how to plant and care for trees, and what to do if problems occur. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy during the program.

Summer Plant Sale - Date: June 12; Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Mercer's annual plant sale offers the perfect opportunity to find just the right plant for your garden. Some of the plants available at this year's sale, which highlights gingers and tropicals, include bamboo, palms, bananas, roses, shade plants and natives. Experts will be available to give information and advice on selecting the proper plants. A special "Members Only" advance sale (for The Mercer Society members only) is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Going Buggy - Date: June 12; Time: 10:00 a.m.; Location: Jesse H. Jones Park, Humble; Phone: 281-446-8588. Join wildlife biologist Don Olhausen on a walk in search of the not so loveable of the animal kingdom: insects, spiders, and other soft-bodied creatures. FREE. Call for more information.

Wild Edibles - Date: June 19; Time: 10:00 a.m.; Location: Jesse H. Jones Park, Humble; Phone: 281-446-8588. Learn some of the wild edible plants growing in the park, nibble a few morsels and sample a wild drink. FREE. Call for more information.

Urban Tree Pests Workshop - Date: June 19; Time: 9:30 a.m.; Location: Texas Forest Service Conroe District - Training Room, 1328 FM 1488. Sponsored by the Texas Forest Service and Texas Master Naturalists of Conroe. The workshop will cover the invasive and beneficial insects in the Texas urban forests. Stephen Clark, entomologist with the US Forest Service in Lufkin, will lead the two-hour classroom and two-hour field session. For more information or to RSVP, contact John Warner, at 936-273-2261 or at jwarner@tfs.tamu.edu.

Drip Irrigation - Date: June 19; Time: 11:00 a.m.; Location: Martha's Bloomers, 8101 Highway 6 Navasota; Phone: 936-870-4111. Presented by David Smith, L.I.

Wonders of the Insect World - Date: June 22; Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.; Location: Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4501 Woodway, Houston; Phone: 713-681-8433. Instructor: Maggie Honig & Bob Honig. Class will examine the many adaptations of insects as well as the major roles they play in the many ecosystems that they inhabit. Fee: \$15 for members. Pre-registration required.

Native Plant Gardening 101 - Date: Meets all dates: Wednesdays, June 23, 30, July 7, 14, 21, and 28; Time: 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.; Location: Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin; Phone: 512-292-4100. Learn to design, install, and maintain a native plant garden. Topics include: site analysis, landscape concepts, plant characteristics and selection, site preparation and installation, maintenance, and further resources. Price: \$110 (Wildflower Center members, \$100). Instructor: Andrea DeLong-Amaya.

Gardening with Nature - Date: July 1; Time: 7:00 p.m.; Location: Harris County Extension Office, 3033 Bear Creek Dr. GCTMN Karen Breneman at the GCTMN meeting, Free.

Junior Master Gardeners:

Congratulation Graduates - On March 29th our first Junior Master Gardener Class graduated! We had the ceremony and then celebrated with a pizza party. Homemade Veggie Pizza was also served. The members are:

Christopher Corbett
Michael Marquez
Danica Yates

McKenzie Elrod
Hannah Meuth

Sierra Elrod
Sydney Travis

Madison Marquez
Katie Wilson

The kids are still going to be around helping out. They will be coming to the Greenhouse on the third Friday of the month during the summer and in the fall we will be working on Wildlife Gardening. They are a lot of fun and a very willing group to work with. The "Groovy Gardeners" have been great and we have all enjoyed working with them.

Junior Master Gardeners/Boy & Girls Club - We are looking for volunteers to help out with the Boys and Girls Club. We have a program scheduled for June 1st thru 4th, June 7, 14, 21, 28 and July 12. We don't need anyone to "do it all" but we do need people to help teach the kids. It is very similar to being a scout leader. All materials are provided. We will be having a meeting on Monday, May 25th 10:00 am. If you want to help out and cannot make the meeting please email Viki Brushwood. Thanks!

Brazosport College Teaching Opportunity:

Brazosport College has asked for us to put together another program, as we see fit, and simply present it to them for scheduling. Kathy Walton and Don Gerard are going to try to organize everyone to plan a schedule to present to the college. Kathy indicates that we need to meet soon because their fall schedule goes to print in the middle of the summer. WE ALSO WOULD LIKE MORE "PRESENTERS," which would allow each presentation to be shortened, so if you have a topic you would like to present, please contact Kathy or Don.

These are the instructors and classes offered by Brazosport College/TCES/MG in the spring. (There were two instructors that are not Master Gardeners.) Please let Don or Kathy know if you would be interested in teaching again in the fall.

1. The Mysterious Hibiscus and Plumeria - Marti Graves
2. Roses are Red & Wonderful! - Pat & Don Gerard
3. Hummingbirds and Butterflies -Barbara Burkhardt
4. Naturalist Gardening - Kirby Rapstein
5. Ponds and Water Plants - Wild Water Ponds, Richard Oliver
6. To Bee or not to Bee - Howard Hewitt
7. Landscape Design - Sandra Taylor
8. Turf - Rob Brown
9. Soil - John alcorn
10. Citrus and Fruit Trees - Gil Livanec
11. Veggies - David & Pam Peltier
12. Pecans - Waverly Jefferson

Most of the comments were about how much the students loved the classes and the great amount of information that was presented. Overall, the students were very pleased. There were a few comments and suggestions about topics students would like to learn about. Some specific comments and suggestions taken from student evaluations were:

- o Would like demonstration and/or hands on grafting.
- o Would like power point and lots of pictures of examples (this particular comment was given a few times)
- o Would like pictures of examples and/or hands on
- o Wanted to see landscape design and learn what the symbols meant. Information on how to design an area including picking out appropriate plants, sun vs. shade, wet vs. dry etc.
- o Brief instruction on how to take clippings and root plants.
- o More information on summerizing and/or winterizing your yard
- o How to prune and feed trees and other large yard plants
- o Insect control - do's & don'ts

Again, if you are interested in presenting a class, contact Kathy Walton or Don Gerard as soon as possible, so they can begin the planning process.

State Master Gardener Conference:

Pam Peltier gave me the rundown on what happened at the state conference. The event began Thursday evening with a reception at the Corpus Christi Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. There was great food

(always a plus), a mariachi band and a tour of the gardens. On Friday they had their choice of going to the Corpus Christi Master Gardener home tours; the Rockport Fulton Garden, Museum, and Aransas County Demonstration Gardens and Children's Discovery Garden; King Ranch Tour; or the Citrus Budding and Care seminar. (John went to the citrus seminar and said it was great.) The awards banquet Friday evening featured Andy Wasowski as the speaker. There were five different lectures/demonstrations available on Saturday: Organic Solutions; Herb Gardening; Winning the War on Weeds; Creating a Fountain; and the Ins and Outs of Master Gardener Awards. Junior Master Gardener Awards were presented at lunch on Saturday. During the entire event, a gardening trade show was taking place, so they could go garden shopping at any time. Pam said everyone who went had a great time and encouraged us all to attend next year's conference.

News and Notes from the Coordinator:

from Paula Craig. CEA

Congratulations

Congrats to our most recent graduates: Barbara Bruyere, Barbara Greeley, Francis Mount, DiAnna Munson, Kathy Walton, Rob Brown and Henry Willis, no worse for having nearly drowned during the ceremony. Apparently, the only place it rained that night-about 4 inches in 30 minutes-was at the greenhouse.

Thank you to all that attended. The food, as always, was fantastic. And thanks to Donie for designing charming bracelets and key chains for the graduates.

Urgent Call for Volunteers

Dear members, I hope that you are all rested and ready for the upcoming Master Gardener Open House, June 5th, 8 am till noon. This is our first attempt at opening the gardens to the public and we need everyone's help to make it a big success. As you know, the Farmers Market and Vegetable Show will be held concurrently with the Open House. We will need volunteers to:

1. Spruce up the grounds before June 5th
2. Set up tables and veggie show
3. Decorate
4. Give tours
5. Serve refreshments
6. Direct traffic
7. Give gardening talks and demos

Most of all, we need folks to meet and greet the public and show them what a wonderful organization we have.

Meet the Interns

Hmmm. I seem to be running out of interns. If you haven't yet been around to see me, please call or email to make an appointment. I would really like to get to know everyone in this very large and interesting class.

Dorothy Babbington: She's cute, petite and smart as a whip. She's also mom to two (I hope it's two. I've already gotten it wrong once) boys and still fairly sane. Dorothy holds a Masters degree in adult education teaches the same at Alvin Community College. Her gardening interests include roses and vegetables. Dorothy is going to give us a hand with children's education.

Jesse Knight, Jr.: He's neither cute, nor petite... (just kidding)! Jesse has taken to the Gardens with a passion--for vegetable gardening and visiting, that is. Even after he was chased by a swarm of angry bees, he came back. Jesse has been a help to our Junior Master Gardeners and wants to continue working with them this summer. He wants to test different varieties of hot peppers and learn more about budding and grafting of fruit trees.

Dick Merrifield: If you were at the plant sale, you had to have tasted Dick's barbeque. Mmm-mmm good. Dick is currently on sabbatical, receiving some needed medical attention. When he gets back, Dick will join the greenhouse crew and put together a committee to plan some north county Master Gardener involvement.

When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.
— John Muir

News to Know:

Condolences - Condolences to intern Martha Schaatt of Danbury whose mother passed on May 8th. Our prayers are with her.

Volunteer Hours - Please remember that our volunteer hours need to be turned in to Don Gerard. You can bring them to the meeting or send them by mail or email. Don appreciates those who have been so diligent about turning them in. Apparently he's been inundated by paper and would rather not have sheets with just a few entries on them. So, if you don't generally fill up a time sheet in one month's time, please continue the next month on the same sheet and turn in your time quarterly-ish.

Birthdays - Hey - there are many, many, many people for whom we have no birthdate. If you are due for a birthday and your name isn't listed in our birthday section, please get your birthdate (just month and day) to Don Gerard.

Congratulations - Suzanne Jerabeck's daughter is graduating from high school! Yea!

New Roster Now Available - There is a new roster out dated April 27, 2004. If your roster is out of date, pick one up at either the greenhouse or the Master Gardener office.

Texas Master Gardener Chat Group - Anse Windham, Master Gardener in Kleberg County, has established a Yahoo chat group for the Texas Master Gardeners as a result of recommendations at the Corpus Christi Convention. To subscribe: TexasMG-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To view/visit the group messages: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TexasMG/>.

Garden Checklist - June:

- ✿ Check plants for insects and diseases. Destroy badly infested plants. Spider mites can be especially troublesome at this time. Select a chemical or organic control, or use insecticidal soap.
- ✿ Supplemental irrigation is essential for many ornamental plants such as coleus, caladium, geranium, dahlia, azalea, and camellia during the hot, dry summer days ahead. Water lawn and garden thoroughly, but not too frequently.
- ✿ During the summer, soil moisture becomes extremely important and essential for good plant production. A good mulch will retain valuable moisture needed for plant growth, and improve overall gardening success. Mulches are usually applied 2 to 6 inches deep, depending on the material used.
- ✿ There is still time to plant some of the colorful, heat-tolerant summer annuals. Direct-seed zinnias and portulaca, and purchase plants of periwinkle, salvia, marigold, and purslane. Be sure to water transplants as needed until roots become established.
- ✿ Removing faded flowers from plants before they set seed will keep them growing and producing flowers. A light application of fertilizer every 4 to 6 weeks will also be helpful.
- ✿ House plants can be moved out of doors this month. Sink the pots in a cool, shaded garden bed to prevent them from drying out so quickly. Water pots, container plants, and hanging baskets often.
- ✿ Now is the time to plan for next spring. Consider digging and dividing any crowded spring bulbs. Once the bulbs have matured and the foliage has turned brown, it is time to spade them up and thin out the stand. Crowded bulbs produce fewer and smaller blooms. They usually need thinning every 3 to 4 years.
- ✿ June is the time to select daylily varieties as they reach their peak of bloom.

- ✿ Fertilize roses every 4 to 6 weeks. Apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer immediately after a flush of bloom.
- ✿ Continue to spray susceptible roses with a black-spot control such as Funginex every 7 to 10 days.
- ✿ Re-blooming salvias, such as *Salvia greggii* and *S. Farinacea*, should be pruned back periodically during the summer. To make the job easier, use hedging shears, and remove only the spent flowers and a few inches of stem below.

Source: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/newsletters/hortupdate/jun03/art3jun.html>

Date: May 9, 2004

On the Herbal Side:

from DiAnna Munson

Prunella vulgaris

Other names: Woundwort, Prunella, Hook-Heal, Slough-Heal, Brunella, Heart of the Earth, Blue-Curls, Heal-All, Brownwort, Carpenter's herb, Carpenter's Weed, and Sicklewort.

This is my favorite herb. It is a fast growing ground cover that will grow in sun or shade. It tolerates almost any soil, but prefers to be kept moist in partial shade. In this area, it will stay green with small purplish-blue flower clusters on spikes, all year long. It will grow from 10 to 30 cm. tall and each plant will spread to a maximum of 50 cm. It is a self sowing perennial, compatible with grass. Mowing over it will not hurt it, in fact mowing will increase the medicinal qualities of the herb. (Trauma to a plant will increase the "medicinal" components as it "heals" itself from the injury.)

Prunella is used for inflammatory diseases and ulcers in the mouth and throat, gastrointestinal problems, as well as a remedy for diarrhea, hemorrhage, and gynecological disorders. It can be used externally for acne, sprains, burns, cuts, diabetic sores, boils, and bruises. Research is showing that it may be useful in the treatment of AIDS, heart disease, venereal disease, cancers and diabetic complications. Again this is research, so don't fire your doctor just yet! No health hazards or drug interactions noted with this herb. The same general cautions concerning chemical contaminations around vegetables should be used with this herb when it is intended for human and animal consumption.

To use this herb: make an infusion using 1 T. herb to 1 cup hot (not boiling) water, steep for 5 min. You can drink this, gargle with it for a sore throat, apply it to cuts, bruises, sprains, strains, etc. or make it into a cream for skin irritations or rashes. If you need the recipe for making a cream, call me.

Reflections from the Garden Goddess:

from Lee Withers

This is my first attempt at writing a feature for this newsletter or any other in regard to gardening and life in general. I had all these ideas wandering in and out of my head for years, sometimes jumping out at me, but now that I have gotten down to the business of actually writing the wheels, seem to grind to a halt. Moments of being clever and creative are fading.

Gardening can be like that too. The creative juices start to flow; a new idea or project comes along and POW you are literally up to your elbows in sweet smelling dirt and sometimes not so sweet smelling manure. That is how it is with me. Dirt consumes me, or should I say attacks me. I really try to be a lady-like gardener. You know the type. Like my husband's Aunt Georgene (truly a sweet, lovely lady - God rest her soul), who always wore the prettiest, flowered print gloves when she was working in the yard with Uncle Howard. It was always one of Life's Great Mysteries (hear the gong) how she would be planting petunias or impatiens, and not only was she not dirty, but her gloves never even looked dirty. She always wore the sweet little all cotton ones with the dainty flowers printed on them. These are the kinds of gloves that wear out after I use them a couple of times. I can't help it, but I am a dirt magnet when I am in the yard. I can't help it, it just happens like compost.

I try to contain this mess that jumps up on me and gets me all dirty by becoming a GLOVE HOUND. I know some of you understand exactly what I mean. We are people that have several to many kinds of gloves. I have had quiet a collection over the years. You see I have had this strange obsession for some time and am only now able to admit it. I have had soft, supple, leather; ½ leather and ½ blue canvas; goatskin; suede; mud gloves; jersey; pretty little cotton print ones like Aunt Georgene's; ordinary latex; thick blue plastic chemical; thicker black plastic chemical; leather gloves with a really cool clasp at the wrist that makes you think you might be a real ranch

hand; ½ cloth and ½ plastic as if it was dipped in some strange neon goop; rose gloves before I ever owned a rose bush; “wet gloves (whatever that was supposed to mean- they were never wet); and probably at least a half dozen more types I have forgotten over time. So you would think that this garden goddess would have nary a speck of dirt under her nails. Right?.... .. WRONG... ..

Just because I have owned all of these various gloves, a few that I even have now, doesn't mean that I could find a complete pair right when I needed them. Besides the problem of trying to find that special place to put them so that the gloves jump out and place themselves on my hand when walking out into the yard, I believe my husband is working against me on this. I try by placing gloves in various strategic places so that I see them as I am heading out to the yard, but then he decides to clean up the porch and my gloves that were stashed in the window box or the small flat-sided bucket on the back door and have disappeared because they were considered “Clutter.” He just doesn't get my unique system of organization. You see - he believes clean is more important than accessibility. Oh well. He, like a garden, is still a work in progress.

Back to the glove problem. It's not just a problem of finding them when you need them, but I think it is a deeper dilemma. I think all my gloves have formed some type of intelligence and banded together to form a conspiracy against me. I think they are trying to control me so that they never get used. This is how it usually plays out. It starts out ever so innocently. I am walking out of the house perhaps to see what outside chores need to be looked into for today when a nasty weed catches my eye begging to have me yank the dear life out of it. My gloves have all disappeared from my mind and my property at this moment. Without a second thought (see how the plot works) I pull the despised life sucking vampire of a plant and then another and another and another and before you know 30 minutes or more have passed without a single glove on my hand. Of course by now my hands are covered in dirt. Foiled again.

Perhaps the weeds are talking to the gloves. Maybe the weeds think if I get dirty enough I will stop in horror. But I think there is hope – I recently read in Country Living Gardener about a new product called Liquid Glove. You spray it on your hands and they are protected. However, I think the same old problems will arise – My husband, Bill, will clean it up and put it away or Liquid Glove will join the WEED/GLOVE conspiracy. Perhaps I should get real clever and invent something where I just dip my hands in some peel off plastic goop when I wake up first thing in the morning, wear it all day and then take it off before I go to bed. Then when I walk outside and get distracted, as I always do, I won't so make so many clever and unusual excuses. But then life would be a bit duller wouldn't it?

Happy Gardening and may all your flowers bloom and vegetables set fruit.

In The Garden:

Landscaping With Old Garden Roses - (Installment #2)

By Dr. William C. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist

Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas

Landscaping with Antique Roses

Roses were historically planted for garden display as much as for cut flower use. Species roses and early hybrids were more shrub-like, and tended to be more insect- and disease-resistant than their modern cousins. Old roses occur in many shrub and vine sizes, making them truly versatile plants.

A brief look at some of the ways old garden roses have been used in landscapes of the past can suggest possibilities for today's gardens.

Trellises and Espaliers

Trellises can be attractive structures themselves, and with the addition of climbing roses, the effect can be spectacular. Ready-made trellises are usually skimpy and out of scale in the landscape. Treated pine, redwood, cedar, or similar long-lasting woods are appropriate for trellis construction. Sometimes a frame can be built, then 4- by 8-foot modules of prefabricated trellage used to finish the design.

Roses can be used for espaliers on the walls of various structures. It is important that roses receive plenty of sunlight and have good air circulation. Walls limit both of these important commodities, and may result in problems with mildew, blackspot, and spider mites. Select varieties that have some resistance to these problems, to increase your chances for success.

Climbing roses trained around windows or over doorways can be especially attractive. In England, roses are sometimes trained on a wall, and allowed to grow on trellage placed on the roof. Only the hardiest roses, however, can tolerate the sun and radiated heat of our Texas summers.

Consider some of the species climbers and exceptionally hardy hybrids such as 'Cecile Brunner', 'Lamarque', 'Lady Banks', 'Fortuniana', and 'Zepherine Drouhin'.

Hedges

Rose hedges can be quite beautiful, but are best used sparingly because of their relatively high degree of maintenance. They are best when shaped periodically but not clipped as one would treat boxwood or privet hedges. Sunny locations and good air circulation are needed to successfully grow rose hedges. Relatively low hedges of 3 to 4 feet can be maintained with some of the Polyantha and China roses. 'Marie Pavie', 'La Marne', 'Old Blush', and various red Chinas are good choices.

Hybrid Musks are useful where 5- to 7-foot hedges are appropriate. 'Ballerina', 'Penelope', 'Cornelia', and 'Belinda' are good prospects. For really large hedges, some of the species roses are good. The white or yellow form of Lady Banks makes huge mounding plants 15 to 20 feet in diameter and 12 to 15 feet tall while requiring little maintenance.

Thorny roses such as 'Mermaid' and 'Cherokee' may be used to form an impenetrable hedge while affording habitat for various bird and animal species.

Staggered plantings, rather than straight rows, are more appealing if sufficient space is available. Roses for hedges may be spaced as closely as 2 feet apart for small types and 10 to 12 feet apart for Banksias, Mermaid, etc.

Although it is usually best to use only one kind of rose in a hedge, interesting effects can be created by using several types. When this is done, it is usually more satisfying to use three or more of a kind together.

Specimens

An occasional large rose specimen in a shrub border can be effective. Also, a number of specimens can be used in a lawn area. Large specimens can also be used to screen unsightly areas or to cover dead trees, stumps, etc.

Some roses have a distinctive weeping form. The 'Swamp Rose' is a good example, and can be used effectively as a single specimen.

Arches and Pillars

Arches can be among the most dramatic garden features. Logical locations are at the entrance or exit to a garden area where a path runs beneath. It is critical that the arch be in scale with its surroundings, and be built of compatible materials. Ready-made arches sold by mail are often too small to fit into most settings. Sufficient height and width must be allowed to accommodate the drape of the rose or other vines used.

The foliage of the rose is equally as important as the flowers. Stiff-caned woody climbers are not nearly so effective on arches as they are on fences and walls. For arches, consider Noisettes, climbing Teas, and various ramblers.

Pillars of roses can be used to frame a garden or as specimens. The pillars themselves are often made of rustic woody limbs, allowing stubs of branches to support the vines. Victorian gardens sometimes connected pillars with chains on which rambling roses were trained.

Three rustic posts may also be arranged teepee-style and lashed or nailed at the top, to provide an interesting effect when covered with roses. An umbrella-shaped trained rose can also be interesting, and is achieved by training a climbing form, such as 'Cecile Brunner', up a central column and out over an umbrella-shaped support.

Pergolas

A garden pergola can also be called a covered alley. Such structures are fairly common in large formal gardens, and can sometimes be used in today's residential landscapes. In small gardens, pergolas can be shortened to 2 or 3 posts, making them deep archways.

Pergolas are most effective on level ground in straight lines. They can be arranged in a cross, with each path leading to separate gardens.

Pergolas may be constructed of rustic timbers, iron, finished wood, or a combination of brick and the previously-mentioned materials. I have also seen them created from concrete designed to look like rustic timbers. The path beneath can be grass, stone, brick, or gravel.

Ever-blooming roses may be alternated with once-flowering types or a single variety for maximum impact. Most ramblers or climbing roses are appropriate for use on pergolas.

Banks and Ground Covers

Loose shrubs and trailing roses are sometimes used on banks and other sunny locations as ground covers. Keeping such plantings weed-free while they are becoming established is often a challenge. Heavy mulching can help. Some of the Wichurianas and other ramblers may be used in this manner. Certain of the species roses, such as the Banksias, Swamp Rose, and R. Fortuniana, can be very effective when allowed to tumble over a wall, especially if there is a pool of water below.

Mixed Borders

One of the most traditional and effective uses of old garden roses is in wide borders mixed with small flowering trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals. Groups of three or more of a variety are usually more effective than single specimens. Care should be taken to allow enough air space around the roses for good circulation, which will help prevent foliar diseases. Teas, Bourbons, Polyanthas, Chinas, Hybrid Perpetuals, Hybrid Musks, Noisettes, and many of the species roses all lend themselves to use in mixed borders. By carefully combining roses with other ornamental plants, striking combinations that can produce color over most of the year can be easily achieved.

Source: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/newsletters/hortupdate/may03/art2may.html>

Date: April 27, 2004

Happy Birthday!

Another May Happy Birthday...

Patty Varnado - May 30

Happy June Birthday Wishes...

Kitty Gray - June 12

James Smith - June 16

Glenn Comiskey - June 17

Jesse Knight - June 18

Thanks - Anna Gawlik, Editor

Happy Gardening!!!

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