



WHAT'S GROWIN' ON

JUNE 2009

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Ah June, the traditional month of **ROSES**...in the north. The rose is the National Floral Symbol of the United States, and June is National Rose Month. Even though Brazoria roses start blooming much earlier, some all winter, we'll keep tradition by highlighting what the poet Sappho first called the "queen of flowers" in 600 BCE.

ED BARRIOS, THE PREZ, SEZ

First I have to congratulate **Cindy Goodrum** for the great job she did planning and executing our annual Spring Plant Sale— see pix below. Everything went smoothly with many, many of our Master Gardeners helping to make this sale a success. Most volunteers were wearing the bright yellow t-shirts that were bought for the citrus sale. It was cool to see so many bright yellow shirts helping the customers. We received many compliments during the sale about how friendly and knowledgeable our gardeners are.

I'd also like to thank **Ann McLain** for organizing and supporting the Saturday Garden Series. The last session is May 30th and this will conclude the Series until next fall. Of course we would not have these sessions if not for all the knowledge and time that our speakers devote to these classes. Thanks to you also for your efforts.

Finally, we seem to be getting some rain, so we might be seeing an explosion in growth in some of our plants - let's hope so.

COMING UP

- ⇒ **BCMGA Board Meeting**
Tues, 06/09/09
5:30 pm AgriLIFE Office
- ⇒ **BCMGA MEETING**
Tues, 06/09/09
6:30 pm Cindy Goodrum's
Awards & Celebration



ROSES AREN'T THE ONLY FRAGRANT FLOWERS

Although almost every nose knows the rose, gardeners don't often consider fragrance when we decide to buy a plant or when we decide where it should be planted. But we should. A few plants with really powerful fragrance can make a big difference in the garden.

What does floral fragrance do for the plant? That mix of volatile chemicals which evaporates in air is an advertisement, one that shouts to potential pollinators "Hey, check this out!" Color guides bees to specific flowers, but the fragrance seems to attract their attention from a distance, bringing them close enough to see the color and pattern cues.

Fragrance may be even more important to night-blooming flowers. In fact, many flowers pollinated by night time creatures, such as moths, only release fragrance during the dark hours, even if they are open continuously for many days.

Some flowers emit powerfully nasty smells. Most of these are trying to attract flies as pollinators, so they imitate rotting meat. That's probably not what most of us want for our gardens.

Where to plant these fragrant nose-grabbers? One good spot for a perfumed plant is under a window that is likely to be opened during the time it will be in bloom. Fragrant flowers can be enjoyed in outdoor sitting areas, or near the door that is most often used. And aren't we just so fortunate that heat and humidity intensify the scents of many plants?

It's probably a good idea to audition these plants before planting, especially if it is a plant you aren't familiar with. Some of these powerful fragrances turn out to be less attractive when we're saturated in them. And response to smells is very personal - some folks may like one aroma, while others find it unpleasant or can't smell it at all. Here are just a few of the many fragrant plants we can grow in Brazoria.



GARDENIA (Spring—Summer)
Various varieties from 2' - 5' H

PETUNIA (Autumn—Spring)
Deep purple & white most fragrant



JASMINE Vines & Shrubs (Bloom Time Varies)
Pink jasmine vine (*J. polyanthum*) above
Arabian jasmine sprawling shrub (*J. sambac*) →



CITRUS (Bloom Time Varies)
All, but especially Meyer
Lemon and Calamodin Orange



BANANA SHRUB (Spring—Summer)
Michelia figo Up to 15' H
Acid Soil, related to Magnolias



BUTTERFLY GINGER
(Summer—Autumn)
Hedychium coronarium



FRAGRANT TEA OLIVE
Blooms every month with "r"
Osmanthus fragrans
Small tree
'Fudingzhu' has largest flowers

SENSUOUS SCENTS FOR THE EVENING



ANGEL TRUMPET
Blooms in flushes almost all year
Various colors; some more scented



MOONFLOWER VINE
Blooms spring to frost
Flowers open late afternoon



4 O'CLOCK
Blooms spring to frost
Prolific self-seeder!

PHOTO CREDITS

Floridata: Gardenia, Banana Shrub
Top Tropicals: Jasmine
Treesearch Farms: Citrus
Nurseries Caroliniana: Fragrant Tea Olive
Forest & Kim Starr: Butterfly Ginger

NOW READ THIS

Antique Roses for the South. Welch, William C. 1990. Dallas: Taylor Publishing (Hardcover)
Revised 2004. Dallas: Taylor Trade (Softcover)

Reviewer: Monica Krancevic

There must be reasons why a non-rosarian, a Yankee no less, who tends only one rose bush, would write a review for a book about old southern roses. Well, those are the reasons.

Antique Roses for the South guides the beginner through the fascinating history of old southern roses, how to use them in the landscape, their cultural needs and a tempting in-depth look at almost 160 roses, complete with scrumptious photographs.

I suspect its original 1990 publication was a landmark for serious southern rosarians who'd been chemically fighting to keep their hybrid teas looking good in heat and humidity. Before the web's advent, before the Earth-Kind® program, Dr. Welch gave gardeners the encouragement to look at landscape roses that had been growing happily in Texas for years, many without much human involvement.

A goodly portion of the book involves arranging roses, preserving roses and using roses in

crafts and potpourris. As those "post-production" aspects don't particularly interest me, I can't comment except to say that those sections seem as carefully and thoroughly thought out as other information in the book.

Of great interest is the concise "Suggested Roses for Various Landscape Needs". Categories include fragrance, color, hips, hedges, climbers and vigor.

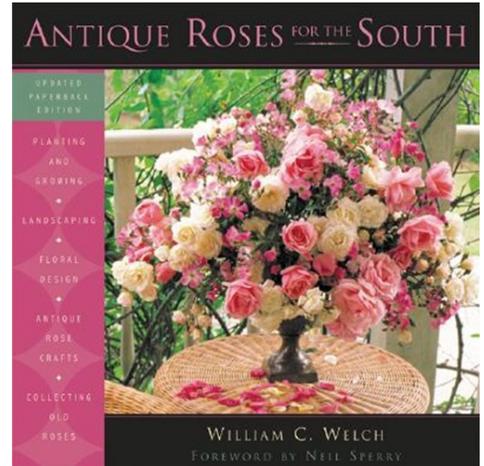
The detailed descriptions of the various rose cultivars are arranged by class. Each class has a introductory description of its history, vigor, hardiness, general landscape uses, disease resistance, growth and flowering habits.

Some of the roses will probably never be Earth-Kind® designated because they're too tender for the northern parts of Texas. And some of the roses thriving in central Texas might not do well in Brazoria County. A local rosarian can help determine if a listed variety does well here.

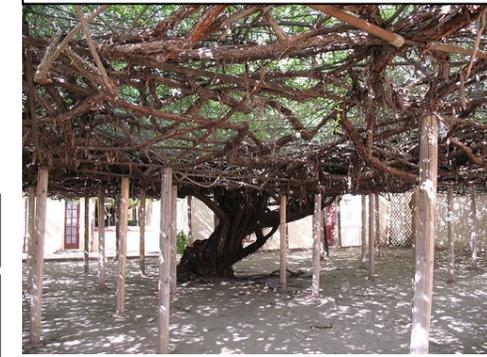
In the revised edition, Dr. Welch updates the

with the latest information and top sources for antique roses.

The first edition is available at 7 branches of the Brazoria Library system. The revised edition is in one branch library.



DID YOU KNOW THESE FACTS ABOUT THE ROSE?

<p>SMALLEST BLOOM 'SI' Bloom less than 1/2"</p> 	<p>OLDEST LIVING BUSH Hildesheim Cathedral, Germany Over 1000 Years Old</p> 	<p>Flowers & Hips of the Dog Rose</p>  <p>Allegedly even older than the 1079 AD cathedral, the rose was buried in rubble after Allied bombing in WWII. Only a burned stump of the native <i>Rosa canina</i> (Dog Rose) remained. Its roots survived and it soon began resprouting. It became a symbol of regeneration for the city.</p>	<p>LARGEST ROSE BUSH Tombstone, AZ <i>Rosa banksiae</i> (Lady Banks Rose)</p> <p>From an 1885 root brought from Scotland, the single trunked rose now covers 8000 sq. ft., or about 90'x90'</p> 
<p>LARGEST BLOOM 'PAUL NEYRON' Bloom can be more than 7" across</p> 	<p>Of 100-150 rose species, none naturally occur in the southern hemisphere.</p>	<p>Paleontologists discovered fossilized roses in Colorado and Oregon that date to 34 million years ago. The fossils appear to have more in common with Asian species than North American.</p>	<p>NASA reports that a shuttle mission carried a miniature rose to determine the effects of zero gravity on the 300 compounds that make up a rose's scent. The company commissioning the research expected a shift in scent. Instead, "the rose had produced an entirely new scent that was definitely not from Earth." The new scent is used in a perfume called "Zen".</p>
<p>One ounce of rose oil requires approximately 250 pounds of rose petals, about 60,000 flowers, in a labor intensive harvesting and production process.</p> <p>\$350 buys one ounce of pure Bulgarian <i>Rosa damascena</i> attar direct from the supplier.</p>			

ANN McLAIN, THE INQUIRING GARDENER: EARTH-KIND® ROSE TRIAL GARDEN

Some gardeners think of roses as being fussy and not worth the bother. I would agree that incorporating roses into an attractive mixed border with annuals, perennials, and other shrubs can be enough of a struggle to make you not bother.

But it really isn't true that roses are all hard to grow. The secret to rose success is to choose varieties that are well adapted to our growing conditions. Plant EarthKind® roses - they've been tested for toughness under all sorts of horrible conditions, conditions similar to Brazoria County.

Back in 2006, our agent, **Paula Craig**, suggested that we might like to participate in an Earth-Kind® rose trial at BEES. A group of master gardeners interested in roses agreed to help, and Paula signed up BCMGA to evaluate the full panel of varieties that were available for testing at that time.

Rose Selection

Roses selected to be evaluated in Earth-Kind® trials aren't necessarily new roses; in fact some tested varieties have been old roses that have been favorites for many years. Rather, the roses that are put through trials are ones that are thought to have a good chance of succeeding. The point of the rose trials is to verify that these varieties are as adaptable as people think they are. In each panel of trial roses there is a control variety. If even the control fails, it would be reasonable to decide that conditions are so bad that no rose can succeed.

The control rose in the current rose trial is 'Carefree Beauty', already an Earth Kind® rose.



The other ten varieties we have in the trial include some old favorites, such as 'Penelope' and 'The Fairy', as well as a group of Buck roses.



The Buck varieties were developed at Iowa State by Professor Buck, who was trying to develop really tough and hardy roses that could do well in the cold of the northern plains. It turns out that some of the Buck roses (and 'Carefree Beauty' was one of them) are also tough enough to tolerate the southern plains, and even the Gulf Coast. The current trial consists of three bushes each of all eleven varieties.

Earth-Kind® Requirements

People have come and gone from the project during the past three years, but surprisingly, all the roses are still there. **An important part of Earth-Kind® trials is that the roses being tested are to get essentially no care at all.**

- ✂ Before we planted them we were allowed to till about three inches of compost into their beds.
- ✂ We were also permitted to irrigate the new bushes during the first year, although it turned out that 2006 was a wet year, and we didn't need to water.
- ✂ Beyond that, we were not to fuss over them. No fertilizer, no pesticides, no pruning, no deadheading. It's sink or swim.

Unexpected Herbicide Damage

Our test roses have seen tough times. On several occasions they have been exposed to overspray with herbicides. Herbicide drifting on the wind can devastate flower beds, and our trial roses have been assaulted several times during the trial. The damage shows up as small, puckered leaves in the new growth, and if enough herbicide is transmitted to the roots, the whole plant may die. We expected the worst several times, but the roses have bounced back each time.

Data Gathering

Data collection started in April 2007, and has continued monthly from April through October each year since. Each month, the data collectors head out with their clipboards to collect data on each rose bush. What they are recording is basics like the general appearance of the bush, plus details on its health. They count the flowers that are open, the buds that are developing, and the "hips", or seed pods, that represent flowers that are finished. They note insect damage and disease.

One rose evaluator who has been constant throughout the trial has been **Barbara Ray**. When I asked her what she thought was the biggest problem for the data collectors, she was quick to point to the heat and the fire ants.



Counting all the buds (or hips) also presents a challenge. Barbara says she actually counts each bud, except on the bushes of 'The Fairy', which has exceptionally abundant buds. On that variety she counts the buds in about a quarter of the bush and multiplies by four to get an estimate. Sometimes 'The Fairy' can have as many as 800 buds on it. The further problem with counts on this old variety is that it blooms all around, and under, the foliage.

The variety 'Penelope' is easier to count, because its buds are in clusters at the ends of branches, and easy to see. 'Penelope' also offers one of the perks of the data collection routine. This musk rose's fragrance, noticeable several bushes away, makes the work more pleasant.

Another faithful data collector is **Ellen Pedisich**. She claims that the hardest part of the project is doing the visual rating, because it is very subjective. She has to remind herself to be consistent throughout each data collection. She finds counting buds and hips a challenge as well, but she also uses estimation

(Continued on page 5)

THE INQUIRING GARDENER (Continued from Page 5)

techniques to make it more manageable. On the day I was in the trial bed distracting her, she managed to count or estimate 400 hips on one 'Carefree Beauty' bush. That represents a lot of flowers in the recent past.

Effects of Microclimates

When we talked, Ellen observed that the southern-most row of roses has not done as well as the other two rows. She also believes that the east end of each of the three rows is not as good as the west end. This underscores the importance of having replication in the rose trials, and of placing the roses randomly within the rows. Each row has one each of the eleven varieties, and the replicates of each variety happen by chance to be growing in different locations from one row to the next. That means that if the soil and microclimate in the trial bed is not uniform (which ours evidently is not) we can still get a good comparison of the varieties.

Weed Problems

When I asked Ellen what she thought the biggest problem with the rose trials has been, her answer was the weeds. Weediness has been a struggle, from the beginning.

The protocol for the trial instructed us to plant the roses eight feet apart within rows, with the rows twelve feet apart. This provides a lot of territory for weeds to claim, especially when the rose bed area had previously been very weedy, rough ground. This spring Ellen has been trying to improve the situation. She has been laying down wet newspaper around the roses and topping it thickly with mulch. So far she has covered two rows and about half of the third. Also, the center aisles are being mowed regularly now. Things are looking much better for this last summer of the trial.

What Happens to the Data?

All the data collected goes to Paula, who has been accumulating it in a spreadsheet. This October, when the trial is over and the last of the data is in, she will be passing it on to the Earth-Kind® director for analysis.

What happens next, I asked Paula. She would like to do another round of trials after this one is completed, but she says we won't be doing eleven varieties again. When the new trials begin, there will be a list of varieties to be evaluated, and participants will be able to choose all or some to plant. Paula says she hopes we will get four varieties at most. The existing roses will be moved or discarded to make room for the new trial.

I just had to ask which varieties are doing best. Since she is not doing the analysis, Paula wasn't willing to commit to specifics, but she did mention two big losers. Neither 'Earth Song' nor 'Floradora' has been happy in our garden.



'Rosarium Weidense' isn't doing all that well, either. But she points out that probably most of the varieties would actually be quite satisfactory for a home garden where they would get some TLC. The Rosarium variety, also known as 'Seminole Wind', is looking good right now.



And even one 'Earth Wind' that has been reduced to a stub by its hard life was blooming beautifully last week.

Even if Paula couldn't tell me which variety was scoring highest, I did ask which rose of this group was her personal favorite. She says that from the first bloom period her favorite has been the lovely pink 'Quietness', and I know it's a winner with others at BEES as well.



Barbara Ray told me that her favorite changes from time to time, but currently she's partial to 'Dublin Bay', because of its brilliant red color that doesn't fade.



Ellen's choice turns out to be 'Summer Wind'. She says she likes it best for its open, single bloom and its vivid color.



Personally, I like most of those roses myself. But it's clear to me that the loveliest rose in the whole trial is soft peachy 'Winter Sunset'.



It looks like there may be someone to love every one of the test roses after all.



Ellen Pedisich working on keeping the weeds out of the trial beds...a continuing battle

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SO, WHAT ARE EARTH-KIND® ROSES?

Earth-Kind® is an important designation given to select roses by the Texas A&M University Agriculture program. Earth-Kind® Roses have been through rigorous statewide testing and evaluation by a team of horticultural experts. They possess the high level of landscape performance and outstanding disease and insect tolerance/resistance required for this special designation.

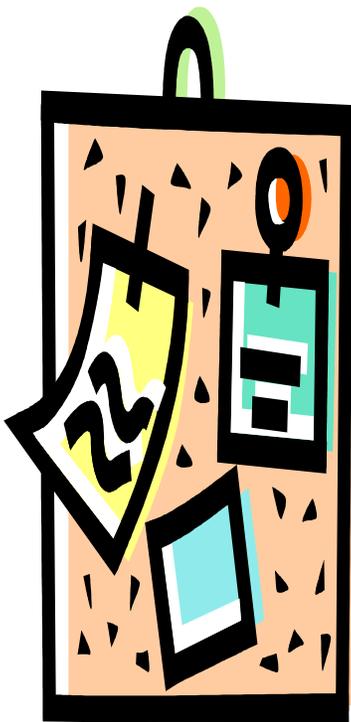
Earth-Kind® Roses are among the most thoroughly tested, and environmentally responsible plants for use in Texas landscapes. These roses do very well in almost any soil type, from the well-drained acid sands of East Texas to the poorly aerated, highly alkaline clays of central and southwest Texas.

Earth-Kind® Roses are certainly not immune to pest problems. However, their tolerance to pests is so great that they rarely require the use of chemical pesticides.

There are 19 rose varieties now designated. You'll find them all in the supplemental section that follows, with photos and brief descriptions.

Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Volunteers Always Needed: B.E.E.S. (the gardens), every Tuesday and Friday, 7:30am–12:00pm

Join the Earth-Kind® Rose Brigade

Amateurs help conduct advanced field testing of experimental rose selections. Your participation will be educational as well as valuable in providing information to the Earth-Kind Team of Extension specialists and research scientists at Texas A&M University.

To participate, simply purchase and plant one or more of the Brigade roses; then, at one, two, three, and four years after transplanting, provide the benefit of your growing experience.

These cultivars should be planted where they will receive at least 8 hours of direct sun each day with good air movement over the foliage. The use of compost and organic mulches is encouraged.

To become a Brigade member, however, you must follow the strict evaluation protocol:

NEVER APPLY COMMERCIAL FERTILIZER...

(i.e. no commercial synthetic, no commercial organic) **AND**

NEVER APPLY PESTICIDES...

(i.e. no fungicides, no insecticides, no miticides, no neem oil, etc.)

More information and a link to the varieties of roses that can be chosen for trial:

<http://earthkindroses.tamu.edu/EKRoseBrigade.html>

Lone Star and Space City Chapters American Hibiscus Society Show & Plant Sale:

Sunday, June 7, 1:00pm–4:00pm

Bellaire Community Center

7008 S. Rice Ave., Bellaire, TX

Additional information at <http://www.lonestarahs.org>

Come early for best selection!