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February is Rose Month

February in Grimes County is rose month. Now is the time to prune, fertilize, amend and mulch your roses so that you have large, beautiful blooms throughout the rest of the year.



Pruning is the best method for shape and maintenance, but well-established roses don't necessarily need to be pruned. Traditionally heavy pruning, appropriate for Hybrid Teas, Floribundas, and Grandifloras, is done around **Valentine's Day (February 14th)** if the plant is not already blooming. If it is blooming, then wait to prune until after flowering has finished. Generally, shrub roses only need to have dead and diseased canes removed and cut back about one-third. You can do this by cutting at a 45-

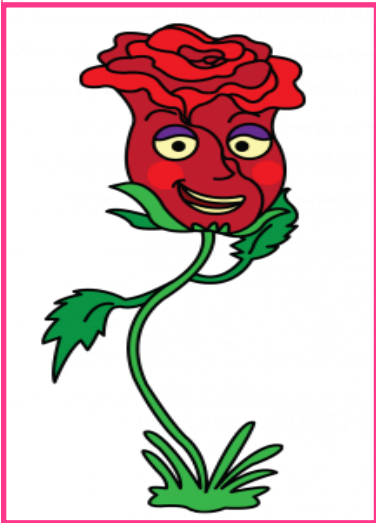
degree angle with clean, sharp-edged pruning shears. Opening up the center of the bush will promote better airflow. Old fashion and one-time blooming vines should not be pruned except after their yearly blooms have been expended. If you are not sure when and how to prune, then consult the American Rose Society for more detailed instructions.

After pruning, remove all weeds and debris from around the base of the roses. Pull back any mulch, add compost or organic matter to the soil. Replace or add mulch to a depth of 3 inches to keep weeds down and help preserve moisture. Fertilize about one to two cups per bush of organic or specialized fertilizer. Water your rose bed thoroughly before and after fertilizer has been applied. During cool seasons or heavy rainfall, you won't need to water at all. During hot, dry summers, you can water once a week to a depth of 1 inch. Always water roses at the base with a drip irrigation hose. Water left on leaves from a sprinkler can lead to black spot, mildew, and fungal problems.

What if you find black spots on the leaves? Don't panic. Remove the affected leaves and throw them away. You don't want them to fall to the soil where they might cause fungal problems later. Most roses will recover if the black spot is not too severe and will produce new healthy leaves. If you are concerned, then spray with seaweed every two weeks or try apple cider vinegar to discourage black spots.



Remember that roses love sun, sun, sun. They need at least six hours of direct sunlight to produce maximum blooms. Morning sunlight is preferable but afternoon sunlight is well tolerated. Spacing is important too for better airflow. A small rose bush can grow into a very large one so plan accordingly.



Anyone Can Grow Roses

Are you afraid to tackle growing roses because you have heard they are difficult? Many gardeners have steered away from roses because they believe they are plagued with pests, fungus, and other problems, but that is actually a myth. Anyone can grow roses if they adhere to some common practices. Roses have been around for thousand of years, many times growing without any aid from humans. If you are interested in trying your hand at growing roses, here are some simple rules to go by.

Select roses that grow well in your area. Then choose a site that gets at least six hours of sunlight a day, preferably morning sun. Amend your soil with organic matter and compost. Provide enough spacing, so the roses are not crowded and allow for good air flow. They don't need a lot of water or fertilizer if you have rich soil and keep mulched. They don't have to be babied when pruning. You can even take a chainsaw to one, and it will survive. If you dead-head old blooms, then you will be rewarded with new ones soon. Even though it is recommended to prune most roses in February, you can prune them all year long. It won't hurt them. Just be aware that deer love roses, thorns, and all. If that becomes a problem, spray with deer repellent every seven days or plant onions and/or garlic around them.

Companion Plants for Roses



Did you know that roses grow well with companion plants? Companion planting refers to the close planting of different species based on their ability to enhance one another's growth or offer some form of pest protection or other advantages. Sometimes this is a matter of choosing plants with different growth habits that don't compete with one another or those that have different nutrient needs that make efficient use of soil. Other times, there may be plants that offer the ability to repel pest invaders, attract beneficial insects, or make the plants less susceptible to disease.

For roses, all members of the **onion** family are useful companions. They deter aphids and other pests by confusing them with their strong scent. They also help roses combat black spot.

While garlic and chives are the most commonly recommended, ornamental alliums like **society garlic** can also be used plus they provide beautiful flowers to complement your bed.

Herbs can also help roses deter pest – again mostly aphids. **Parsley, thyme** and **scented geraniums** all work well as companion plants for roses.

There are some plants that should never be planted next to roses. Those include plants that provide too much shade, plants with spreading root systems and especially plants that are considered invasive.

Article from the Spruce, written by Colleen Vanderlinden, 11/19/19

Organic Rose Fertilizer Recipe

Use this recipe for one standard rose bush:

- 1 cup alfalfa meal
- 1 cup fish meal
- ½ cup blood meal
- 1 cup cottonseed meal
- ½ cup bone meal
- ½ cup Epsom Salt

Mix all ingredients together. Rake the mulch away from the plant and pour the mix in a ring at the drip line of the plant. Do not scratch or dig it into the soil. Cover the mix with mulch and water the plant as you normally would. This feeds the plant and the soil for about 6 months. Apply in early spring and early fall for continuous feeding throughout the year.

It's Not Too Late Onion Lovers

It's not too late to plant onions. According to the AgriLife Vegetable Planting guide, from October to early February is the time to plant onion bulbs. In this area, you can grow yellow, white, and red onions and many feed stores are stocked with onion sets now. Below are the best varieties for our area.

<u>Short Day (less than 12 hours day length)</u>	
Yellow	Chula Vista, Cougar, Jaguar, Legend Linda Vista, Mercedes, Prowler, Safari, Sweet Sunrise, TX 1015Y, Early Grano 502, Granex
White	Cirrus, Marquesa, TX Early White, Crystal Wax
Red	Red Bone, Rio Santiago, Sakata Red, Red Burgandy
<u>Intermediate Day (12-13 hour day length)</u>	
Yellow	Caballero, Cimarron, Rivera, Utopia, Yula
White	Alabaster, Mid Star, Sierra Blanca, Spano
Red	Fuego
<u>Long Day (14-16 hour day length)</u>	
Yellow	Armada, Capri, Durano, El Charo, Ole, Seville, Sweet Perfection, Valdez, Vaquero, Vega
White	Blanco Duro, Sterlin, White Spanish, Sweet
Red	Tango

From Onion Growing Guide: Joseph Masabni

Prepping: Select a site that will get full sunlight, free of weeds, and is well-draining. Work the soil 8 to 10 inches amending it with compost so that your final planting site will become a loose, loamy soil. Spread a good 10-10-10 fertilizer and work into the soil 3 to 4 inches deep.

Planting: Plant onion sets ¾ inch deep and 3 inches apart. Do not plant deeper than this, as onion bulbs prefer to sit close to the soil's surface. Anything deeper may cause the bulb to rot or not develop properly.

Fertilizing: Onions are heavy phosphorous feeders so they like soil amendments that are low in nitrogen and high in phosphorous. **Bone meal** and **rock phosphate** are two good amendments to add. Apply fertilizer again when the onions have developed 5 or 6 leaves. Each leaf forms a ring in the onion bulb – more leaves means more rings. Water after adding fertilizer.

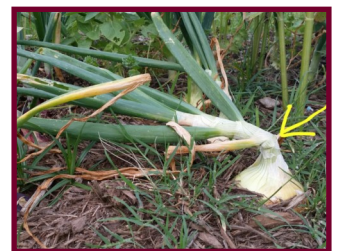
Watering: Water once a week in spring and more often during dry, hot weather. Don't overwater as this will cause the bulbs to rot.

Diseases/Insects: Very few insects bother onions except thrips. Sevin dust or BT-based insecticides can safely be used to combat them. Brown leaf tips or brown spots may indicate a disease process in the onions. Neem oil and fungicides help control diseases.




Harvesting: Transplanted onions in January/February should be ready for harvesting from May thru July. *When you see the tops fall over*, that means the onion is ready for harvesting and can be gently pulled out of the soil. Leave them lying in the garden for 1 to 2 days to dry.



Storing: Clean off excess dirt with a damp cloth but don't wash as this tends to make the onions not dry out properly. Continue drying in a box or set up a drying rack like the one shown here. Leave in a cool, dry place until ready to use.



What is Photoperiodism?

 <p>Long-day Plants</p>	 <p>Short-day Plants</p>	 <p>Day-neutral Plants</p>
<p>Beets Lettuce Carrots Onions Cilantro Peas Dill Potatoes Fennel Radishes</p>	<p>Cucumbers Beans Sweet Potato Okra Sunflower</p>	<p>Apple Pears Cabbage Tomatoes Corn Kale</p>

Have you ever heard the term “photoperiodism” in gardening? As defined in the dictionary, photoperiodism is “the response of an organism to seasonal changes in day length.” It’s the amount of light and darkness a plant is exposed to. Why would a gardener need to know about photoperiodism? Scientists discovered that it was the hours of *uninterrupted darkness* that triggered flowering, rather than the hours of light. There are three terms used in photoperiodism: short-day, long-day, and neutral-day.

Short-Day: A plant that requires a long period of darkness is called a “short-day” (long night) plant. Short-day plants only form flowers when the day length is less than 12 hours. Many spring and fall plants are short-day plants like chrysanthemum, poinsettia, violets, kalanchoe, onion. If they are exposed to more than 12 hours of daylight, then bloom formation will not occur.

Long-Day: A plant that requires a short night to flower is called a “long day” plant. Blooming only occurs if the plant receives more than 12 hours of daylight. Examples of long-day plants include coneflowers, aster, foxglove, lettuce, petunia, sedum, and hibiscus.

Neutral Day: This term means that the length of day or night doesn’t affect bloom formation. Many plants such as tomatoes, corn, kale and apples fall into this category.

Why is this important to know? For two reasons. A gardener knowing how much or less sunlight (darkness) a plant needs to bloom can help determine which plants should be planted and when. Second, gardeners can manipulate day and night length in a controlled environment like a greenhouse to force out-of-season blooming. Or you can jump start blooming for long-day plants by growing the plants in a greenhouse to simulate summer sunlight.

GOT A GARDENING QUESTION?

Got a gardening problem or question? Contact our Master Gardeners to get help:

grimescountymastergardeners@gmail.com or call us at [936-873-3917](tel:936-873-3917).

A photo along with your question will help us find an answer.

Events

Grimes County Master Gardeners will have their **February Business Meeting on Tuesday, February 9th—9:00 a.m.** This will be a **zoom only meeting**.

February Garden Work Day: February 16th—9:00 a.m. at the Grimes County Extension Office.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, no in-person continuing education classes are available. Below are some virtual learning and webinars for this month.

February 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 ★	4 ★	5	6 ★
7	8	9 ★	10 ★	11	12	13 ★
14	15	16 ★	17 ★	18 ★	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Continuing Education and Events

- Feb 3: Gardening on the Gulf Coast; **“Seasonal Landscape Pruning”**, 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Free
- Feb 4: Home Grown Lecture Series, Harris County AgriLife, **“Spring Garden Prep”**, 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Free
- Feb 6: Urban Harvest, **“Basic Fruit Tree Care & Planting”**, 9:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m. \$20
- Feb 9: Urban Harvest, **“Fruit Tree Share & Care Discussion”**, 5:30 p.m.—7:00 p.m. \$20
- Feb 10: Urban Harvest, **“Fruit Tree Orchards & Regenerative Agriculture”**, 5:30 p.m.—7:00 p.m. \$20
- Feb 13: Urban Harvest, **“Growing Fruit Trees in Small Spaces”**, 9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m. \$20
- Feb 16: Texas A&M Garden Interest Group (GIG); **“Texas Tough Gardening”**, 10:00 a.m.
 Contact for Zoom Meeting Invitation: tamugig@gmail.com
- Feb 17: Gardening on the Gulf Coast; **“Best Practices for Citrus Plants”**, 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Free
- Feb 18: Home Grown Lecture Series, Harris County AgriLife; **“Spring Vegetable Gardening”**, 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Free

Upcoming Master Gardener Advanced Training Offerings

- **Tree & Tree Care:** February 12, 19, & 26, 2021; hosted by Tarrant County in Fort Worth, TX. This training will be held **virtually** on three consecutive Fridays.
- **Entomology:** March 16- May 6, 2021; hosted by Bexar County in San Antonio, TX. This training will be held **virtually**.

Ready for a Spring Challenge?



WALK
ACROSS TEXAS!

Grimes County

Walk Across Texas 2021 Challenge February 14th - April 10th

Register your Team at howdyhealth.org

Deadline to register is February 17, 2021

Walk Across Texas is a great way to get active! Create a team and get started. Make it a competition, challenge your co-workers or friends!

2021 Awards

- Top 3 Teams
- Most Creative Team Name
- Nominations for MVP

For more information Contact:
Kyla Moeller at 936-873-3907 or
kyla.gladson@ag.tamu.edu

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

What is a WAT! Challenge?

- Teams of up to 8 members
- Empowering each other to walk 832 miles in 8 Weeks
- Participation is FREE!
- Mileage will be reported weekly
- Participants can walk, jog, bike, swim, or run. The Walk Across Texas website has a mileage equivalent calculator.
- Adult Teams and Youth Teams can participate



Congratulations!



Alvie Vesperman—15 Year Pin



Kady Hackenberg—Master Gardener Certificate

Garden Work Day

A big “Thanks” goes out to our master gardeners who came out in January to clean up, prune, weed and fertilize our flowerbeds at the Grimes County Extension Office.



Texas Master Gardeners

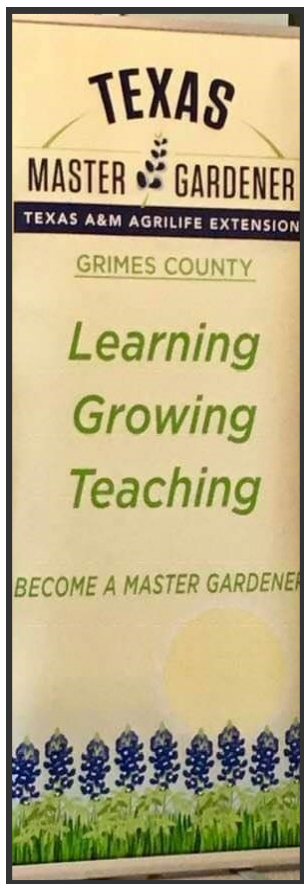
203 Veterans Memorial Drive
Navasota, Texas 77868

Website: txmg.org/grimes
Facebook: www.facebook.com/GrimesCountyMasterGardeners



Grimes County Master Gardeners

Please send submissions and photos by the 20th of each month to: pwparmley@gmail.com



2021 Board of Directors

- President.....Paula Parmley
- Vice PresidentKimberly Hertan
- SecretaryRenee Harter
- TreasurerHerb Abraham

2021 Committees/Chairs

- Administrative.....Connie Arden
- Advertising/PublicityPeggy Sloan
- Auditing.....Jena Jackson
- Community Garden.....Cathey Hardeman
- Co-op.....Fred Vesperman
- Fair Judging.....Vicki Wood
- FundraisingCarol Garnet
- Historian.....Sharon Murry
- Intern Class Coordination.....Herb Abraham
- Junior Master Gardener.....Kay Douglas
- NewsletterPaula Parmley
- Nominating.....Carol Garnet
- Social Media.....Jamie Bruns
- Scholarship ProgramKimberly Hertan/Renee Harter
- TimekeepingMartha Brogdon
- TMGA AwardsSharon Murry