Have you completed your New Year’s resolutions yet? Or, should I ask, have you put aside most of those for some other time? If one of your resolutions was to either start or revitalize that rose garden, I hope you haven’t given up hope. February is a wonderful time to be in the rose garden preparing for an abundance of color in early April and throughout the summer.

Roses often take a tough rap about how hard they are to grow and maintain. As the kids say, “Bummer.” Not so! Roses are tough plants and can withstand much adversity. Generally, it is the grower who weakens long before the plant will. Some of us call growing roses a hobby, others a “mission.” The goal remains the same: to grow one of God’s most beautiful floral creations.

And now that mission has become easier for the average enthusiast. The tendency toward shrub roses, multi-purpose roses for mixed beds and easy-care roses has continued and intensified. New varieties that make fewer demands on the gardener and simplify garden tasks have been successfully introduced in Europe (and have found their way here) and in this country.

There is much more talk of the sustainable rose garden, a garden that features low-maintenance, highly disease-resistant varieties and also environmentally aware practices and materials that minimize the use of chemicals. Earth Kind (a rose type developed by Texas A&M), easy care, or carefree roses are the latest “buzz” words in the garden. While Old Garden Roses, or OGRs, remain a choice of some growers and are highly resistant, their popularity seems to have dwindled.

For a “birds-eye” view of a very new rose garden, come see the Knock Out roses planted at the UF/IFAS Nassau County Demonstration Garden at the James S. Page Governmental Center. We’ve planted four varieties: Knock Out Double Rose (*Rosa hybrida Radtko*), Knock Out Rose Pink (*Rosa Radcon*), Knock Out Rose Rainbow (*Rosa Radcor*) and Knockout Rose (*Rosa Radrazz*).

As C. Austin Miles said, “What a joy to tarry there!”
These programs are free to the public, so please call us at 904-491-7340 or e-mail rljordi@ufl.edu if you plan to attend. If response is too small, the program will be canceled.

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Landscape Matters

Citrus
10AM-11AM
Wednesday January 12, 2011
Rebecca Jordi, Horticulture Agent III

Roses
10AM-11AM
Wednesday February 9th, 2011
Master Gardener Paul Gossnell

Location
Citrus
Yulee Satellite Office
86026 Pages Dairy Rd.
Yulee, FL

Location
Roses
Demonstration Garden
Nassau County
Government Complex
96135 Nassau Place
Yulee, FL

Plant Clinics
10AM-2PM
Monday, February 7, 2010
Monday, February 28, 2010

Spotlight on Nassau Gardens

November Winner - Mr. & Mrs. Francis Lott

These lovely Christmas Palms are in Mr. and Mrs. Francis Lott’s foyer. The are watered by a separate irrigation system, draining the water through the floor grates to the outside.

View more photos online at http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/spotlight/spotlight.html. To be considered for Spotlight on Nassau Gardens, send a digital photo, with a description of your garden, along with your name, address and phone number to atwoodca@bellsouth.net. For more information contact Rebecca Jordi at 491-7340.

Growing Apples in Florida by Rebecca Jordi

W
e can grow several varieties of apple here, but they will be different than your grocery store type. The apple tree itself, however, is beautiful and well worth the effort.

Apples grown here require full sun, good air circulation, and a soil pH of 6.0 to 6.5. Planting on hill tops is preferable to low lying areas because hill tops confer good air and surface water drainage. The recommended cultivars are ‘Anna’, ‘Dorsett Golden’ and ‘Tropic Sweet’. Most apple cultivars are not self-fruitful; thus, more than one cultivar should be planted together for cross pollination. ‘Anna’ and ‘Dorsett Golden’ originated in Israel and the Bahamas, respectively. ‘Tropic Sweet’ is a new patented cultivar from the University of Florida breeding program. All three varieties serve as pollinizers to each other.

Fruit ripens on these three varieties from late May through June. Tree bloom and fruit ripening are generally 2 to 3 weeks earlier in north central than in north Florida. All three cultivars have good keeping quality and will last up to six to eight weeks with refrigeration. For more information look up the University of Florida publication called, “Low Chill Apple Cultivars for North and North Central Florida” or check out the website: http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG388

SOIL TESTING

The UF/IFAS Extension Soil Testing Laboratory can test your soil and provide a detailed analysis.

WHY SOIL TESTING IS IMPORTANT

Good crop production often requires the application of lime and fertilizer. Soil testing enables you to find out the makeup of your soil and helps you determine how much lime and fertilizer you need to apply.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR SOIL

To find out what you need to do to improve your soil’s quality, you should know each of the following attributes of the soil:

• Current pH levels of your soil.
• Fertility levels of the principal nutrients.
• Type and quantity of lime your soil needs.
• Nutrients need to be added to your soil as fertilizer.
• Amount of fertilizer your crop and soil needs.

If you do not have this information, a soil test may help.

LIMITATIONS OF SOIL TESTING

Soil testing can let you know where your soil needs treatment or improvement. However, a soil test cannot do any of the following:

• Tell you which crop to grow.
• Prevent poor crops caused by drought, disease, insects, too much water, or other problems.
• Substitute for proper cultural practices.
• Replace good management.

HOW TO TAKE A SOIL SAMPLE

Keep in mind that soil test results generally take a couple of weeks to arrive back from the lab. Lime may need up to six months to produce the full effect in raising the soil pH. Be sure to send samples to the lab well before it’s time to fertilize so that you can use the results to determine what kinds of fertilizer to buy.

Before following these instructions, contact your county Extension agent for complete information.

• Divide your garden into areas for sampling. If you have areas with different crop growth, soil color, or lime or fertilizer histories, take a sample from each area. Keep the samples separated.
• Collect samples that provide an general example of the field or area sampled.
• Do not sample areas that are too small to be fertilized or limed separately. Do not sample unusual areas, wet spots, feeding areas, burn piles, old fence rows, sand boils, and other problem areas.
• Use a proper sampling tool, such as a sampling tube or auger. If it is necessary to use a shovel or trowel, dig a 6-inch-deep V-shaped hole in the soil. Slice a 1-inch slab off one side of the hole, and lift out the slab. For the sample, save a 1-inch-wide strip of soil from the center of the slab.

• Use a sampling tube to take a 6-inch-deep core of soil from at least fifteen spots in each field or area to be tested. Sample lawns only to a 3-inch depth. Mix together the cores from one field or area. Put about a pint of the mixed soil in a soil sample bag.
• Identify the samples by letter or number. Make a sketch or record of some kind so you will know which sample came from which field or area.
• Fill out the appropriate information sheets and submission forms. These forms are available at your county Extension office and the Extension Soil Testing Laboratory Web site. Include these forms and payment when mailing the samples.
• Send samples to the laboratory for analysis. Shipping boxes are available at your county Extension office.
• Consult with your county Extension agent if you need help interpreting the test results or fertilization recommendations.
• Follow the recommendations!

Adapted from:
Soil Testing (Circular 239) by Gerald Kister and R.D.Rhue. Published by: Soil and Water Science Department (rev. 9/2003)
“TO DO” LIST FOR JANUARY

**Citrus:** Water as needed - especially 24-48 hours before a freeze. Protect fruit grafted area if freeze will occur.

**Fruits:** Major removal of twigs and branches or before spring. Weed as needed. Apply 6-6-6- or 8-8-8 fertilizer to Pears.

**Flowers:** Annuals to plant are carnations, pansies, petunias, snapdragons, delphiniums, larkspur, dianthus, and foxgloves. Be ready to move less hardy bulbs inside. Most others, like ginger and amaryllis may have their foliage damaged during severe cold, but can be left in the ground and be expected to survive. Tulips, hyacinths, and daffodils can be planted now if you refrigerated them for 8 weeks to meet their chilling requirements.

**Roses:** DO NOT Fertilize. Water as needed. Prepare sites for new plants 1/3 top soil, 1/3 dehydrated cow manure, 1/3 peat moss, ½ cup super phosphate or bone meal

**Herbs:** Plant anise, borage, chives, chervil, coriander, fennel, garlic, lavender, marjoram, mint, parsley, rosemary, sage, sesame, sweet marjoram, and thyme.

**Lawns:** This is fertilize free month. Check the soil to determine water needs. When the grass blades fold it’s time to water. Water once every 10-14 days in the winter. If mowing, keep your mower height at the highest level.

**Perennials:** Water when surface soil is dry to the touch, make sure you have 2-3 inches of mulch around the roots, and water during the morning hours only. Outdoor plants require less water in the winter months. Roses should be pruned once each year during December or January in North Florida.

**Trees:** Remove dead limbs, trim off suckers, lanky growth, and crisscrossing limbs; remove old seedpods. Don’t perform major pruning on any flowering trees that produce their blooms during the spring months.

**Vegetables:** English peas, beets, broccoli, potatoes, cabbage, celery, carrots, bunching onions, radishes, turnips, and cauliflower can be planted now.

Selected from Florida Vegetable Guide by JM Stephens, RA Dunn, G Kidder, D Short, & GW Simone, University of Florida and Month-by-Month Gardening in Florida by Tom MacCubbin

“TO DO” LIST FOR FEBRUARY

**Citrus:** Water as needed. Prune any water sprouts, suckers, rubbing or crossing branches. Weed as needed.

**Fruits:** Major removal of twigs and branches or before spring. Weed as needed. Check irrigation to ensure it is working. Make repairs.

**Flowers:** Remove all dead plant portions of annuals. Baby’s breath, calendulas, carnations, dianthus, dusty miller, Marguerite daisies, pansies, petunias, and snapdragons can be planted this month. Prune out declining foliage of bulbs as needed. Use insecticidal soap for aphids.

**Herbs:** Anise, basil, bay laurel, borage, caraway, cardamom, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, ginger, horehound, lemon balm, lavender, lovage, marjoram, Mexican tarragon, mint, nasturtium, parsley, oregano, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme and watercress can be planted now

**Roses:** Water as needed. Apply organic materials around each plant. 1 cup cow manure, 1 cup fish meal, ½ cup Epsom salts. Begin spray program every 7-10 days (Fungicide); spray entire plant including underside of leaves.

**Lawns:** Cut St. Augustine lawns as needed; keep the mowing height highest level for your grass variety. Cutting grass too short encourages insects damage and disease. No fertilizer this month.

**Perennials:** Do not rush to prune out the dead or declining portions, as some cold may linger until March. Leaving dead portions on may provide some protection in case another freeze occurs. Prune ornamental grasses. Remove all brown cut stems to 6-12 inches above ground and feed!

**Trees:** Existing well-established trees and palms do not normally need special watering - the nearby irrigation of lawns, shrubs, and flower beds normally supply adequate moisture. Some exceptions may be dogwoods or red maples.

**Vegetables:** This month you can plant beets, broccoli, carrots, cabbage, collards, cauliflower, celery, endive/escarole, lettuce, mustard, bunching onions, parsley, turnips. Before you start your garden, be sure to have the soil tested. The University of Florida will do a full nutrient test for only $7. Come by the office to pick up a soil kit or call us at 904 879-1019 or 904-491-7340 for more information. Put raked leaves and grass clippings in a compost pile. As they rot, they make an excellent organic material to add to the soil when planting vegetables and some ornamental plants.

Selected from Florida Vegetable Guide by JM Stephens, RA Dunn, G Kidder, D Short, & GW Simone, University of Florida and Month-by-Month Gardening in Florida by Tom MacCubbin
Master Gardeners toured the Rayonier forest adjacent to Pages Dairy Road, 17, and the St. Mary's River and visited a former sawmill community in Crandall, FL. Their tour included site visits to learn about forest management and sustainability. The Master Gardeners learned about duckweed, loblolly pine, longleaf pine, and slash pine, grafting, seeding, the "baby tree nursery," fusiform rust and other topics. They also discovered that countless products such as shampoo, cosmetics, rayon clothing, pharmaceuticals, coffee filters, tool handles, buttons, photographic film, shipped toppings, diet foods, ice cream and other food products are manufactured with cellulose pulp from trees similar to that produced at Rayonier specialty pulp mills.
Need to block out the view of your neighbor’s yard? Grow some shrubs for a privacy border. Think about wax myrtle, viburnum or pittosporum.

Southern wax myrtle, *Myrica cerifera*, takes a variety of soils, grows in full to partial sun and can reach heights 12-15 feet. Plant should be placed 10 feet apart, watered well at establishment but will then need no further care. Wax myrtle is moderately drought tolerant but can tolerate salt spray.

It may have an occasional worm defoliate leaves but those can be easily pruned out to control any potential infestation.

Wax Myrtle

Sweet Viburnum, *Viburnum odoratissimum*, grows quickly in full sun or partial shade in a wide variety of soils. It is moderately drought tolerant but it is a poor choice for salty areas. This plant can reach heights of 18 feet and will spread about the same width. It is generally free of pests and easy to maintain.

Sweet Viburnum

Pittosporum, *Pittosporum tobira*, grows in partial shade to partial sun on a variety of soils. They can reach heights of up to 12 feet with a 12-18 feet spread. Plant should be placed 3-5 feet apart. It is highly drought tolerant so little water is needed after establishment.

Consider using all three and staggering them between each other. They all have different colored leaves and the growth habits are complimentary. These are just a few choices but they should be enough to get you started.

Pittosporum

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