**THE GARDEN PATH**

Garden path by Heidi Moore
Kerr Lake Master Gardener

**ROSE TIPS FOR THE MONTH**
*By: Heidi Moore, Kerr Lake Master Gardener*

**MAINTENANCE**

As soon as the weather begins to warm it will be time for us to think about getting back out into the garden. February is the ideal month for moving those rose bushes that need to be relocated. Roses should be planted where they can receive 6-8 hours of full sunlight each day. The site should allow for good air circulation and water drainage. Be sure to prepare your soil with organic matter to ensure the best growing medium for your plants. Dig a hole at least 12” deep and 18” wide to accommodate a good size root system. Broken roots should be pruned and the top portion of the plant cut back to 5-7”.

Before putting the soil back around the roots be sure to hydrate with plenty of water. Mulch will help to keep the soil moist, discouraging weeds and keep the soil at an even temperature.

Pruning could be one of the most important and necessary steps in growing roses. Pruning should begin just before new growth appears, as indicated by swelling buds. This usually occurs around the middle of February to early March in this area of North Carolina. Correct pruning will improve the overall shape, promote new and healthier growth and eliminate any broken or diseased canes. Knock-out roses should be trimmed back to a desirable height if you do not have the space to let them randomly grow. They can become very large and unsightly if not trimmed of any broken or dead wood.

Grandiflora, floribunda and hybrid tea roses should be trimmed back to a height of about 10-12 inches leaving only 3-5 strong canes. Pruning cuts should be clean and at a slant. The wood should be removed about ½ inch ideally above an outside bud. Climbers are pruned according to class. Spring flowering ramblers are pruned immediately after blooming. The old wood should be removed to stimulate new growth which will flower the next year.

After you have completed your pruning, it will be important to feed your roses. You can apply a slow release formula or use a commercial grade 10-10-10 and supplement it with cow manure. Follow manufacturer’s suggestions for application. Finally, an application of an organic mulch will help to keep your roses free of weeds and soil at an even temperature.

**ROSE VARIETY:**
**MODERN SHRUB ROSES**

Shrub roses are characterized by their bushy, shrub-like form. Through the latter half of the 20th and into the 21st centuries, intensive breeding has expanded this once small class into a large
and diverse group of roses especially appropriate for the landscape. Recent hybridizing breakthroughs combine old garden rose flower form and fragrance with modern colors and recurrent bloom to create the rise of the Modern Shrub Rose. Shrub and carpet roses are grown on their own root stock (not grafted) and have relatively few disease problems. They do not need supplemental winter protection. They can grow 4 feet tall and 4 feet wide or larger if left unattended. The most popular of the new modern shrub rose is the Knock-out rose. The first red Knock-out rose variety was introduced in 2000. Since their introduction, these easy-to-grow plants are now available in several different colors and flower formation, and can be purchased as either a bush or climber.

**ROSE TERMS**

**Balled:** A term used to describe a rose bud that has not opened properly and has rotted

**Bare Root:** a dormant, pruned plant that is sold without soil

**Basal Break:** A strong, new cane growing from the bud union

**Blind Shoot:** a non-flowering growth that must be removed to enable the plant to expend its energy on creating flowers rather than foliage.

**CHECKLIST FOR THE MONTH**

*By: Mary Jane Bosworth, Kerr Lake Master Gardener*

- It’s time for general **pruning**. In general, remove any diseased, dead or damaged branches. Some plants may need to be controlled for size. Allowing for air circulation is another reason for pruning for plant health. For specific information about pruning check out:

  http://durham.ces.ncsu.edu/files/library/32/UNH%2009.PDF

- **Bush roses** should be thinned to 3-5 strong canes and shortened to 15”. Prune climbers after they flower in early summer.

- **Ornamental grasses** should be cut back before new growth appears.

- **Fescue lawns** should be fertilized around Valentine’s Day. Use a slow release, turf-grade fertilizer at a rate of one pound of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft.

- Apply dormant oil spray to **fruit trees and ornamentals** for control of overwintering insects and eggs.

- Remember to sit by the fire and **plan your garden** using all the wonderful catalogs that are available to you.

**PLANT OF THE MONTH**

*Moss*

*By: Marty Finkel, Kerr Lake Master Gardener*

Mosses are the emeralds in the garden and are especially brilliant in winter. They can stand alone, as in a moss carpet, but adding stone, wood, and/or water creates a garden of serenity and repose. A moss planter, or just a rock with moss, is beautiful on a table, deck, or patio in the shade.

Mosses are bryophytes with unique botanical characteristics that distinguish them from other plants. They are nonvascular, have rhizoids instead of roots to help connect them to soil or stones, and have no flowers/seeds. Their leaves have no cuticles and are only one cell thick, enabling them to receive all the nourishment they need from rainfall and dust particles directly through the leaves.

A 1997 checklist of the mosses of NC from the Duke Bryology Lab listed 443. Moss should be planted in a shady area where the ground can be tamped firmly, the pH is between 5.0 and 6.0 (can be lower but not higher), and there is access...
February 2011

GARDEN TO DO
By: Carl Schafer, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

During warm spells, dormant sprays can be applied to fruit trees and vines this month. For specific recommendations, check the NC Chemical Manual, (http://ipm.ncsu.edu/agchem/agchem.html), and always follow label directions. For additional information see: Fruit Disease Information Note No. 2, Disease and Insect Management in the Home Orchard. For the dormant spray only, dormant oil and lime-sulfur may be combined. When leaves are present this combination will burn the leaves.

Finish pruning fruits if needed before spraying. Peach trees and grape vines normally need the most pruning. Check at the Extension office for pruning bulletins, and watch for scheduled Extension pruning demonstrations. See Training & Pruning Fruit Trees, AG-29 (www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/ag29.html).


Get a copy of the Extension Services Home Vegetable Gardening AG-06, (www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/pdf/ag-06.pdf) to use to plan your garden this year. Notice that many cool season, direct seeded, vegetables can be planted starting in February. These include: garden and edible-pod peas, beets, carrots, lettuce, onions (seeds, sets, and plants), radishes, Irish potatoes, and spinach. Be careful to not work the soil when it is too wet. For planning purposes, note that the average last frost date for the Henderson area is about April 21.

Start seeds early this month of broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower for transplanting in mid to late March. Start seeds of eggplant, pepper, and
tomato later this month for transplanting in late April and early May. See Growing Vegetable Transplants for the Home Garden, HIL 8104, (www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/pdf/hil-8104.pdf). I find that I need to start eggplants and peppers about two weeks before the tomatoes.

Mid-February is the recommended time to fertilize fescue lawns, with March 15 being the latest date. For warm season grasses, wait until they green up. For lawn grass information, see NCSU Turf Files. For a complete listing of NCSU Extension Publications for Lawn and Garden, see www.ces.ncsu.edu/publications/lawngarden.php.

When starting seeds, check weeks required to reach planting size and the last frost date to determine when to plant the seeds.

Some useful web sites:


Felder Rushing’s Website www.felderrushing.net.

HERB OF THE MONTH
By: Ladybug aka Edna Gaston, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

While herbs are great in the landscape as a specimen plant, in containers, lining the front of a flower bed, grouped together or in a traditional kitchen herb garden, it is possible and fun to create thematic gardens. Here’s an idea – herbs that represent the different signs of the zodiac.

Each sign of the zodiac is ruled by a certain element (fire, earth, air, water) and thereby creates characteristics specific to that sign. Traditional uses of herbs correspond to these characteristics. It is very interesting to read about these in detail – but that might be a topic for another day.

There are several ways to design a zodiac garden. The plants can be placed randomly in an area, spaced around the garden or be more creative – prepare a circle, place a sundial in the middle then fill in the area with zodiac herbs. A couple other ideas are place a wagon wheel with twelve spokes in a prepared area, then plant an herb in each section. If the area for the garden is long and narrow, then use a ladder (or a couple of small ladders) that also has twelve spaces for plants.

While there are several herbs that correspond to each sign, the following is a short list of readily available herbs to begin a zodiac garden:

Aries – garlic
Taurus – horehound
Gemini – parsley
Cancer – chamomile
Leo – rosemary
Virgo – dill
Libra – thyme
Scorpio – southernwood
Sagittarius – borage
Capricorn – sage
Aquarius – lemon balm
Pisces – chives

Note: One of my references is a booklet by Susan Wittig Albert. She also writes great mystery novels featuring China Bayles, a former lawyer who has now settled in Pecan Springs, Texas. Each of these novels has an herb in its title, and herbs are featured prominently while China solves a murder.
Additional Information:


MAKE YOUR WINTER BACKYARD BIRD FRIENDLY & JOIN IN THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

By: Kay Nutt, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

Want to have a bird friendly backyard and take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count February 18th to the 21st? You may already be a bird watcher keeping your feeders full during the winter months when food sources are slim. Seeds and suet will provide the protein source needed by wintering birds. This great past time of watching birds is shared by more than half the population of America, who put out food for birds on a regular schedule. When encouraging birds, you need to remember the big three things to help attract birds to your backyard.

These big three are water, food and cover (finding a protective place from winter weather). There is an array of containers to hold water so birds can not only drink, but bathe; Yes, even in winter they must keep feathers preened, ready to fight off cold and make a quick get away from a hawk. With the extreme cold of this winter you might want to invest in a bird bath water heater.

Wintering birds have special needs. The colder the weather the more food small birds need to stay alive. Chickadees must search all day in cold weather just to get through another night. Keep feeders filled with sunflower, nyger, and proso millet for cardinals, sparrows, tufted titmice, finches and chickadees. Remember insect eating birds such as bluebirds, wintering red winged birds and Carolina Wrens are unable to crack the shells of seeds, but will get energy from shelled sunflower chips and safflower seeds. If your feeder attracts squirrels, start early to discourage their dining by adding pepper. Most birds will be unaffected because they cannot smell. I throw seeds on the ground, especially on the snow, for the ground feeders such as doves, juncos, towhees, and sparrows. All birds enjoy and will get the needed energy from suet blocks. My woodpeckers are big suet eaters.

Feeders provide instant gratification as long as they are kept filled; However, planting a wildlife garden for the birds will provide food, cover and the necessary protection in winter. Add viburnum for berries and cover, sumac, American Holy (Ilex opaca) and Yaupon Holly (Ilex vomitoria) to your yard. Protective plants also can hide small birds from ever present hawks, allowing the bird to survive one more day. Native plants such as Beautyberry bush (callicarpa), crabapple and juniper provide fall and winter berries to eat.

Bird feeding in the winter benefits both the birds and humans who enjoy watching them. At a time when food sources are marginal, providing high power energy helps get birds through another winter.
The pleasure from watching birds is therapeutic. The Great Backyard Bird Count is in its 14th year. We can make sure the birds in our community are well represented in the count. Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are located. Bird populations are dynamic, they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document the complex distribution and movement of so many species in such a short time. The folks at Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology need our help, visit www.birdsource.org/gbbc/ and get counting!

INTERESTING TID-BITS
By: Marty Finkel, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

When planting brugmansias (angels’ trumpets), they will have a better chance of being reliably perennial if the ground drains very well and if it is well mulched. Choosing cold resistant selections such as ‘Cherub’ (salmon pink), ‘Charles Grimaldi’ (yellowish-orange), ‘Double White’, and ‘Sunset’ (apricot) among others will also help. For container growing, since these can reach 8’ or more, try the dwarfs ‘Inca Sun’ and ‘Angel’s Summer Dream’. As with woody salvias, it’s better to prune the dead, hollow stems back in the early spring after the worst of the cold.

The Jan./Feb. 2011 issue of The American Gardener journal has an article “New Plants for 2011” that covers fruits, vegetables, trees, shrubs, roses, vines and climbers, perennials and grasses. Several new blueberries are mentioned, among which is ‘Pink Lemonade’ that has true pink berries with sweeter flavor than the standard fruits. It was developed by the USDA’s breeding program and is being released through Briggs Nursery in Washington (wholesale) to retail locations. It grows 3 to 5’ tall and wide and has fiery fall color. For you lovers of yellow foliage, a small redbud, Cercis canadensis ‘JN2’, trademark Rising Sun, has been released. It grows to 12’ tall and slightly wider and has lemon-yellow to apricot or orange colored leaves. Note: Mark Weathington (J C Raulston Arboretum) says the Arboretum has had Rising Sun growing there for a year, and at the Sandhills Research Station it has been doing well for a couple of years. He says the new growth is more apricot than that of ‘Hearts of Gold’.

Continuing in the yellow spectrum, expect to see Juniperus horizontalis appear in brilliant chartreuse spring through fall with coral tones later. It’s ‘Gold Strike’, a dwarf with a spreading habit. A dwarf (3’-5’ tall and wide) version of ‘Limelight’ hydrangea is available with lime green flowers, Hydrangea paniculata ‘Jane’, trademarked Little Lime. A new tomato, ‘Defiant PhR’ has been bred for fungal disease resistance and is reported to be highly resistant to late blight, and somewhat resistant to early blight.

A couple of new sausage vines are part of the Dan Hinkley Collection of noteworthy plants and are being introduced by Monrovia to the retail trade. They are Holboellia coriacea ‘Cathedral Gem’ and H. latifolia ‘Ritak’, Zones 6-10. The...
former has highly perfumed flowers and was found growing on the wall of Winchester Cathedral in Britain. The latter was found in a remote corner of northeastern Nepal. Dan Hinkley is one of the speakers in the JC Raulston Arboretum, Raleigh, half-day symposium “A Passion For Plants” February 26th.

Editor: Merwin R. Dieckmann, MD, Kerr Lake Master Gardener
CAPTMERWIN@AOL.COM

Format Editor: Danny Dixon, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

Extension Agent: Paul McKenzie
Vance and Warren County Centers, NCCE
North Carolina State University, CALS
305 Young St.
Henderson, NC 27536
252-438-8188 (Vance) 252-257-3640 (Warren)
252-492-4830 (fax)
paul_mckenzie@ncsu.edu
http://vance.ces.ncsu.edu
http://warren.ces.ncsu.edu

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