THE GARDEN PATH

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

MAINTENANCE

Your rose bushes are well on their way to producing some beautiful flowers for the coming season after all the preparations made to soil and plants in the last couple of months. Now that the first buds are setting and starting to open, be sure to check for insect damage. Aphids, thrips, and rose midges can cause early damage to your roses, but you should only use insecticides if you have seen evidence of their presence. Fungicidal spraying to control black spot, powdery mildew, and other fungi is very important. Your spraying routine should be every 7-10 days throughout the growing season.

It is also important to continue your garden hygiene to prevent insects and diseases from breeding in debris left unattended. It is still an ideal planting and relocating time. Just be sure to hydrate every day so as to establish a good root system.

Keep a record of rain each week so you are able to provide supplemental hydration that your roses need to grow successfully. Water with a sprinkler or individually with a hose if at least 1-1 ½ inches of rain has not fallen in a seven day period. You can also start supplying a liquid fertilizer when watering as it will help to keep your plants strong and producing many flowers during the growing season. Begin deadheading spent flowers to prevent debris from accumulating and encouraging new growth.

ROSE VARIETY:
FLORIBUNDA AND GRANDIFLORA ROSES

Floribunda roses are a result of crossing polyantha species roses with hybrid tea varieties combining hardiness, free flowering, and showy, usually fragrant, blooms. Generally, they have smaller flowers than hybrid teas, but produce a bouquet of blooms on each stem. Floribundas are usually low-growing, densely branched bushes which are quite adaptable to many landscape uses. The foliage on floribunda roses tends to shrug off diseases, making for a low-maintenance rose that delivers maximum impact with its continuous bloom cycles. They are available in a vast variety of color ranges.

Grandiflora roses originated by combining the best traits of the hybrid tea and floribunda roses. The resulting rose is quite vigorous and produces elegantly shaped blooms as the hybrid tea, but fewer flowers than the floribunda. They grow in long-stemmed clusters that continually repeat bloom. The plants tend to grow up to 6 feet tall,
are quite hardy and disease resistant. Because of their size, Grandiflora roses are well-suited for hedges and garden backgrounds.

**ROSE TERMS**

**Heirloom:** a plant or seed variety that has been passed down through the generations.

**Rose Hip:** the seedpod or fruit of the rose. Hips are produced in a wide assortment of bright fall colors and shapes and are generally more predominant in old garden roses that flower once per year.

**Deadhead:** to prune off faded flower heads. Cutting back the stem to an outward facing bud will encourage the plant to make more flower buds. Unless you desire ornamental hips in the fall, all roses should be regularly deadheaded to prolong the growing season.

**Procumbent:** a plant that trails along the ground

**Remontant:** a plant that blooms continuously or is a repeat bloomer

**Sucker:** an unwanted growth that comes from below the bud union on a grafted rose. This is the growth of the understock and must be removed. Suckers usually have leaves of a different color and shape than that of the cultivar. It is important to rip off the sucker directly from the rootstock; simply cutting it off will stimulate it to regrow.

**Spray:** a group of blooms on a single stem.

**PLANT OF THE MONTH**

*Bletilla striata*

*By: Marty Finkel, Kerr Lake Master Gardener*

There are two species of the beautiful, easy to grow, ground orchid, *Bletilla striata* and *B. ochracea*. There are several cultivars of *Bletilla striata* in colors of pink, purple, rose, lavender, white, and a couple of two-toned ones. *B. striata* ‘Kuchibeni’ has white upper petals with a purple lip, and ‘Murasaki Shikibu’ has pale lavender flowers with a purple lip. *B. ochracea*, Chinese

Butterfly Hardy Orchid, has flowers varying from creamy yellow to a medium yellow. This one is a slow grower and a little more finicky to grow, requiring moist, rich soil and morning sun or high filtered light shade. The origin of these orchids is China. *Bletillas* are the easiest of the ground orchids to grow, requiring slightly moist rich garden soil and light shade but will grow well with morning sun. They will multiply slowly to produce a nice patch, and they bloom in April/May. The orchids rise between iris-like pleated leaves.

Photos from the JC Raulston Arboretum collection:

**GARDEN TO DO**

*By: Carl Schafer, Kerr Lake Master Gardener*

Check previous TO DO lists as many items continue to be relevant. Note spray and thinning recommendations.*
Prune out fire blight damaged wood on your fruit trees. Sterilize your pruners between cuts.

All the warm and hot weather vegetables can be planted now.

Get *Strawberries in the Home Garden*, HIL 8205, ([www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8205.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8205.html)) to find the needed steps to renovate your strawberry bed.

When cool season crops (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and green, sugar snap, and snow peas) begin to mature, harvest every couple of days for best quality. Hot weather can cause these crops to be over mature very quickly.

Mulch tomatoes and peppers, and keep them evenly moist to reduce blossom end rot.

Extend your sweet corn harvest by successive plantings every two to three weeks or by planting early, mid, and late maturing varieties all at the same time. Make repeated plantings of vegetables based on space availability and your likes.

Control annual weeds by mulching and hand-weeding.

For information on fertilizing, both preplanting and side dressing, get *Home Vegetable Gardening* booklet AG-06 from the internet or the County Extension Center.*

Check your garden every day or two to spot and solve problems early.

If you are planning to raise your own transplants for a fall garden, you need to start seeds in June to have plants ready to set out in late July and early August. Plants to try include Brussel Sprouts, Broccoli, Cauliflower, and Cabbage.*

For more information on planning a fall garden, see the article in the July 2007, *Garden Path*, or *Growing a Fall Vegetable Garden*, HIL 8001, ([www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8001.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8001.html)).

Check NCSU Turf Files for a maintenance calendar for your kind of lawn grass.

Allow spring blooming bulbs leaves to die naturally for good reflowering. Plant tender summer blooming bulbs now.

Any annual flower seed pack that says, “Sow after last frost”, can be planted outside now.

Perennial lantanas and salvias can be pruned as new growth emerges.

Shrubs and trees are best planted in the fall, but container-grown plants can continue to be planted if you are careful to keep them watered.


**HERB OF THE MONTH**

By: Ladybug aka Edna Gaston, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

*Sanguisorba minor, Burnet or Salad Burnet*

**Height:** 1- 3 ft.

**Flowers:** May – June, small, pink in color

**Propagation:** division, seeds (easily reseeds itself)

**Growing conditions:** full sun to partial shade, average soil

**Cultivation:** once established it is very hardy – very few pests.

**Uses:** Salads – leaves have a cucumber flavor, wonderful to flavor vinegar. Fresh leaves can be added to cold drinks, soups or use as a garnish. But use only the young leaves as the older ones tend to be bitter.
HISTORY:
Burnet, or Salad Burnet as it is frequently called, is a good addition to the garden. With its graceful fern-like foliage this bushy perennial makes a good border plant or a striking specimen. It is equally at home in the garden or in a container.

This herb has been used for over 2000 years. It has moved in and out of favor over the centuries. Thomas Jefferson was an advocate as was Sir Francis Bacon. Since this plant easily reseeds and to encourage more foliage, clip flower stalks as they appear. This plant is not picky about soils but is most happy with the addition of lime.

Since burnet does not freeze well, container plants can be moved inside during the winter to continue providing fresh leaves for the salad or other uses. It will need plenty of sun/bright light. As with most herbs, regular fertilization is not necessary but an occasional light feeding won’t hurt.

Try this plant in a container with other herbs like parsley and borage. Use in the herb garden or as a landscape plant. In any use it makes a nice addition to the garden!

Additional Information:

NOT YOUR GRANDMOTHER’S GERANIUM
By: Ladybug aka Edna Gaston, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

All of us have seen the beautiful geraniums with flowers in shades of red, pink, white salmon and combinations thereof. Wonderful to see, but not much to smell. Scented Geraniums to the rescue. Grown for the wide array of scents, the flowers are not spectacular but still nice to behold.

Pelargoniums, as they are officially known, originated in South Africa. They made their way to the Netherlands, on to England and have been a gardening favorite ever since. Not cold tolerant in our area, they can be overwintered inside to enjoy year after year.

The flowers of the Scented Geranium are five petals, two upper and three lower. Most flowers are light in color, white or shades of pink and lilac. While growth may be contained if grown in a pot, they can range from 18 inches to 3 feet when planted in the garden.

Oh but the leaves!!! Some are deeply lobed, others round, deeply cut, lacy, touches of color as in yellow or brown, small and crinkled, smooth, rough. Quite a variety for such a wonderful plant. These leaves come in a wide variety of scents – rose, fruits, spices, many others. Some of my favorites are Chocolate Mint, Rober’s Lemon Rose, Snowflake, Attar of Rose, Lime, Nutmeg, Apple, and Citrosa. I had successfully grown these in pots on my deck, overwintering in my greenhouse, for several years . . . until last summer. For the first time squirrels decided they liked my collection and during the time I was out of town bit every one of them off at the soil level. They withered and died before I returned, much to my dismay. So I now had the pleasure of starting over.
Scented Geraniums like well-drained soil. Morning sun is ideal, afternoon sun can scorch them in the middle of the summer. An occasional watering with fertilizer is all they need. As with herbs, these plants are grown for the scent in the leaves so too much fertilizer will cause rapid growth that results in loss of scent. Be careful about giving them too much water – use the “knuckle test” to determine when water is needed. Pruning, pinching back is great and necessary – they benefit greatly when shaped up. Some have a tendency to become leggy if not monitored. Deadheading helps the plant in growth and appearance. Pests are few and far between. If any are spotted, usually a good squirt of water from the hose is sufficient.

If the plants are grown in containers, gradually acclimate them from the sunny outdoors to the more limited sun of the house before the weather turns too cool. If grown directly in the soil and the plant is now quite large, then take cuttings. They can be rooted either in water or in soil. After rooting, transplant into individual pots for winter growth and care.

There are many gardening books that have recipes for incorporating Scented Geranium leaves in cooking and in potpourri. As with any plant, take care when using since some are susceptible to allergic reactions.

Scented Geraniums are truly wonderful plants – great variety in leaf shape, size, texture. Flowers, while not spectacular, are interesting. But the scent is just fabulous. Rub your hand through the leaves and you will be hooked for life. The plants work as a specimen, grouped together or mixed with other plants. Try ’em, you’ll like ’em!

Additional Information:


May 2011

CHECKLIST FOR THE MONTH

By: Mary Jane Bosworth, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

- Sitting on the porch the other day, I heard a small jet go by, reminding me to set out the hummingbird feeders.
- Azaleas, climbing roses, camellias and rhododendrons can be pruned after they have finished blooming.
- Fertilize crepe myrtles with 1 cup of 8-8-8 per plant to get abundant summer bloom.
- If they aren’t in yet, heat loving vegetables can be safely planted now.
- Mulch around tomatoes and peppers now to help prevent blossom end rot.
- Plant tender warm season bulbs like cannas, calendulas, gladiolus and dahlias.
- Fast growing clematis should be pruned and trained to prevent it from becoming unmanageable mess.
- Prepare for dry weather by mulching.
- Control weeds by using a pre-emergent herbicide.

INTERESTING TID-BITS

By: Marty Finkel, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

Some calorie-burning statistics based on a body weight of 150 pounds:
(Activities are rated in calories/hour)

Usually apples grow larger by producing more cells, but a tree has been found in a Tennessee orchard that produces ‘Gala’ apples 40% larger than other ‘Gala’ fruits. However, in ‘Grand Gala’ the cells themselves grow larger, a phenomenon known as endoreduplication. If the gene or genes that cause it can be isolated, they could be used to increase the size of other apples.
A new pest to watch out for: the brown marmorated stink bug. It seems to cause greater damage than other stink bugs because its saliva contains a very strong enzyme that liquefies tissues around its bite areas, causing necrosis. This bug, native to the Far East, was first found in Pennsylvania in 2001 but is now being found in 29 states. In a recent newsletter from one of the NC Cooperative Extension county agents, it was reported that this stink bug has been seen in N.C.

There is a reblooming lilac in the nursery trade now, called ‘Bloomerang.’ It grows 4 – 5’ tall, has purple, fragrant flowers in spring and again from late summer to frost. Another reblooming lilac is ‘Josee’, with lavender pink flowers, also in the trade.

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