



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY
 APRIL 2022

Who will be our speaker on April 14? The table will be set with wonderful Easter foods, tea will be prepared, the chairs put out. Members will arrive in anticipation of another Herb Society meeting.

Will it be an historian from The Garden Center to take us on a tour of the building and tell us about the history of The Garden Center itself?

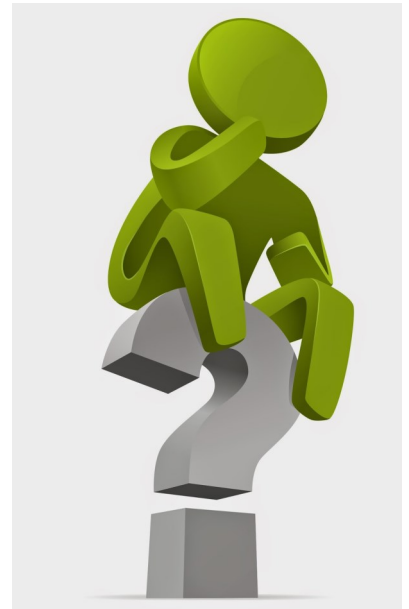
Or Molly Keck, to instruct us on organic ways of eliminating garden pests?

Or Stephen Lucke to show us slides of his wonderful urban Gardopia?

Or Sue Calberg to help us learn how to keep a garden journal?

Or maybe someone else.... You can be the hero of the day. Step up to help with this year's speaker list.

As we go to press, it is still undetermined. See you April 14th!



**SAN ANTONIO
 HERB SOCIETY**
 Mark your calendar for
 April 14, 2022
 3310 N. New Braunfels
 San Antonio, 79209
 Social 6:30
 Meeting 7 p.m.

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PROCESS OF GETTING SPEAKERS

“We don’t know how to go about this task!”

“What does she expect us to do?”

“Isn’t there someone who is expert at this that can take over the project?”

In the short history of the time I have been in the Herb Society, there has been only one person who attacked the job and accomplished it with great success. Rachael Cywinski joined us on the board as a new member. We tasked her with finding speakers. The very next month, she had a whole year’s worth of speakers. We were utterly astounded.

“I just asked all the people I wanted to hear from to come and share their expertise” was her simple explanation.

Maybe the rest of us just don’t get around as much as she does.

So, let’s walk through this process together. A member calls me up. She does have a question. She wants to know how to get rid of a specific bug on her specific plant. Is there someone who can come to speak to us about using safe and organic methods to get rid of this bug? on this plant? Maybe a Master Gardener from their speakers bureau can come?

Yes. There is Molly Keck, that I know of. There is also someone else who works with the Master Gardeners, but I do not remember the name. I also know that sometimes the bug gets eaten by other predators- bugs or birds or lizards- and then it really is not a problem.

Well, this is a problem because it ate the whole plant.

At this point, I lob the ball back into her court. Google Bexar County Master Gardeners. Their website has information about speakers. Look for Molly Keck, send her a request. However, Master Gardeners are very time conscious, and do not do anything at the drop of a hat. They want two to three months time before they fill your request. So, call but expect to make arrangements for May or June or even July. Which is fine, we will need a speaker then, too. Better yet, we can make it a “bring your kid’s or grandkids” meeting and include them in the identification of bugs.

Some speakers are very busy. They have lots of requests for their time. Often they are running a business, and it is out of the kindness of their hearts that they come to address us. Others have a product to sell and are more than willing to come, as long as we provide an audience with some money to buy their product.

We, of course, want to have unique, fascinating, entertaining and informative speakers... and what they speak

about should have some relevance to gardening or herbs.

So what this cranky president is challenging you to do is:

Pick a topic that you have questions about

Brainstorm: who knows this information? Who can I find to explain this to the group?

Go to their shop. Pick up the phone. Google the topic. Do research. Find someone that is knowledgeable.

Ask them if they would come and speak to us. Ask them who they know who knows more.

Ok. I admit. That last step is a big cliff. Calling up someone you don't know and asking them to do something for a whole group of people is HARD. (i speak from experience)

When you drill for oil (which will lead to great riches) you may get what is called a dry hole. You drill hole after hole, but no oil. Just water and rock. but if you are optimistic, and you are looking in real oil country, hopefully, after a few dry holes you will strike oil

Same deal here. Everyone one you call says "No." Until someone says "Yes."

As you go along you get better and better at explaining how cool Herb Society is, and how eager your audience is to hear this speaker. And if the speaker does not feel they have enough expertise, you can always ask them what they would feel comfortable talking about.

Or you can ask them whoelse would know more about this topic. You just keep knocking on doors and asking. Eventually you find a speaker.

Two topics I have spent a long time pursuing, but have not been successful yet are: How to Keep a Garden Journal and How Did Deet Come to be Invented?

I have tried calling English teachers on a college level, talked to Journalism teachers, tried to get in touch with journalism teachers from different schools, but, so far, have not been successful in finding a speaker. Have met a woman who KEPT a garden journal, turned it into a series of books, published them and now was selling them. Not what I was interested in. I wanted to find someone who had done research on how a scientist keeps a journal of their garden. This is very broad and has a variety of answers. I just know there is someone somewhere who knows a lot about this. Just have not found them ...yet.

Did do a lot of investigation into DEET. The scientist credited with the invention, used first in the Viet Nam War, is still alive. I got as far as who he was but ran out of **time** investigating whether I could speak to him or not. Finding someone knowledgeable about a topic sometimes takes a lot of shoe leather. But for our group, it is worth the effort.

It is just that each of us has interests. And I know that we can do this, if each person pursues one idea. Share your thoughts with other members. Ask questions. Pursue new information

Thank you for making that effort. You will be enriched by it, as will we all.



WEED AND GLOAT MARCH 2022 Journal notes

The poppies are up and blooming. We love their pepper shaker pods. When ripened, you can shake the seed out to replant poppies. Laura put seeds all over an area in her garden, got one (1) poppy. There must be a trick to re-seeding. Botanical Gardens pull them all out, and next year, more poppies.

Last month, we puzzled as to which poppies to pull. Now we know, leave the ones in the back, pull the front ones. They are two feet high and cover up all our herbs.

We could say poppy seeds are a spice, close to herb? Maybe a member could research how to propagate poppies from seed.

It was a bad traffic day, we all arrived late. Dennis Joy, our gardener, provided three rosemary plants (They grow large and permanent, so placed against the fence.) Also, three Cuban oreganos. These tend to get large and fleshy, spread low and add color. Put them close to the front, touching range so patrons can touch and smell.

Use these in cooking but be sparing, a small amount goes a long

way in flavor. Even though it is variegated, large leaves would overpower a salad.

The garden is lush, but we are at Stage 1 water restrictions, headed toward Stage 2. The birdbath was completely empty and dirt filled. We washed and replenished with water. New issue, no hoses reach our patch. Need to find out how to access closest tap. It has a plumbing connection that we do not know how to use.

Bergarten Sage is huge. We need to propagate and cut back. Artemisia and other sages also.

Thyme, both French and English are growing abundantly. We see evidence of rooting from buried pieces. Would love to see them growing into huge mounds.

Up and looking healthy: pot marjoram, comfrey, French sorrel, Rusty fennel, mint. Chamomile, which looks so fragile, is now bounding and beginning to go to flower.

Finally growing: Hopley's oregano, lemon grass, lemon balm and variegated sage. We cut back overhanging artemisia so the Hopley's could grow.

Not sure they will come back: shampoo ginger and turmeric. We found knuckles of ginger where it had been growing last year (dug it up by mistake) but do not see any shoots for this year. It is still cool, perhaps they will grow as it gets warmer. Not growing in the beds across from us in Medicinal either. No sign of toothache plant either.

Made a list of To Ask For and To Do for the April garden, went to La Madeline with coupons for lunch.



WEED AND GLOAT

Come weed with us at the

Botanical Gardens!

Feel welcome to come to join us
this month in the sunshine.

Next Weed and Gloat is scheduled
for Monday, April 25
We meet at 9 A.M.

Contact robinmaymar@gmail.com for
simple safety measures we need to take
and directions for parking and gear to bring. .
See you then.



UPCOMING EVENTS

San Antonio Herb Society Meeting Thursday April 14 6:30 refreshments, 7 p.m. speaker

OTHER MEETINGS AT THE GARDEN CENTER

Wednesday, **April 6** Garden Center Monthly Meeting Guest speaker: Robert Nowlin

Coffee and Plant Sale 9:30 a.m. Program 10 a.m. This is free and open to the public.

Robert Nowlin, former Bexar County Master Gardener and owner of the organically certified Rising Kale Farm, will introduce you to **“The World of Mushrooms”** which he grows on a specifically designed mushroom growing system. He will show different varieties of mushrooms and tell how to use them in your food preparation. Q and A will follow presentation.

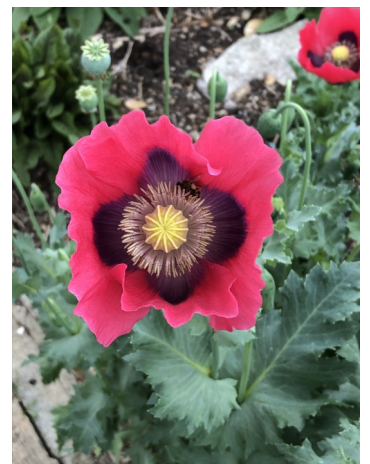
We will also have our left over plants from the Plant Sale available for purchase.

April 11 Rose Society Meeting VP-Programs, Gregory Ross, has arranged for an internationally recognized **photographer Alyce Bender** to come and offer guidance on how to take beautiful photographs of individual blooms and of your whole garden, as well as how to get creative with abstract photos of your roses. With your roses coming into their spring bloom, come learn how to take better pictures of them. You will have the beautiful photos to keep and share long after the roses are gone.

Rose Society announces: **Spring Rose Show** will be on Saturday, April 23 at the Garden Center

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Basilfest May 21 will be held at the Pearl. This is in conjunction with the regular Farmers’ Market which meets every Saturday. More details available during our monthly meeting. Herb Society will have a booth, will need volunteers.



REPORT ON EARTHWISE LIVING DAY

“You’re inside on the right, “they directed me when I arrived.

“Aw, heck, I thought to myself.” My whole scheme had been to stay in the open air, and not be in a crowded space. I know, we all have been vaccinated, and we are in good health, but you never know about the other guy.



Oh, well. The doors were all open, the air circulation excellent, and excitement was in the air. This is the first show in a number of years, and new vendors were there setting up.

This show emphasizes good ecological practices. We were next to the Raingarden demonstration. She had a model of how to collect water from downspouts, make a depression in the yard for the rainwater to collect, like a little pond, so that the water does not run off the roof and into the street. You can plant flowers in the depression. They absorb a lot of the water, and you keep the water that falls on your property on your property. If everyone did this...

On the other side of us were clever solar lights. These were free standing lights, large enough to light your patio, have battery storage and are free standing. You did not have to have wires going out to the lights at all. They showed a number of farm applications that probably would save a ton of money because you would not have to hire an electrician to run wires out to where you needed the light.

There were the Book Recyclers- who used the binding and the pages of books to transform them into beautiful journals, or into purses.

The Sierra Club was there, showing patrons how to recycle practically everything. VIA busses was represented, with maps and information, there were gardening hats for sale. Even the Mayor of Leon Valley welcomed us.

Roanna Mayer arrived early and had a look around. She then joined me in selling ollas, Save The Planet napkins with metal silverware inside, to use as replacement for all that plastic silverware we keep getting at the fast food drive through. Then Marsh Wilson arrived. We had a very successful sale, renewed some old acquaintances and had a grand day.



Next year, I promise to post pictures of all we saw BEFORE the event. I want you all to attend. This is a hidden gem of an event. I find inspiration here every time I come.



Culinary Contributions

Laura Eckert suggested these two salad recipes. She said that she did not particularly like spending time constructing a salad. She would rather have something on hand to pull out of the fridge. Most constructed salads do not age well. Cole slaw came to mind, it is far better on day two. So these two are lovely Grab and Go style salads she used all the time.

Kale Salad

1/4 c apple cider vinegar

1/4 cup olive oil

1/4 cup brown sugar

dash soy sauce (I used a few glugs)

dash garlic, jarred (I left out the garlic)

One package of shredded kale

Bring the dressing ingredients to a boil and stir well to combine them. I just do this in the microwave in a Pyrex 2 cup measure.

Pour the hot dressing over shredded kale and toss until evenly coated.

Optional additions: diced apple, diced oranges, toasted almonds, Craisins, dried cherries
other nuts

Laura says "I used one package of shredded kale from Trader Joe's, with the big bits of stem picked out. There was plenty of dressing for that one bag of kale, this would probably be enough dressing for more kale".

Robin adds: "Cut the outer kale leaves on the plants. The inner leaves keep growing. You can harvest over and over. Trim the center stems out and shred the leaves."



My French Carrot Salad

Contributed by Laura Eckert, from <https://www.davidlebovitz.com/carottes-rapee/#comments>

7 large carrots, grated fine

2-3 tablespoons olive oil

lemon juice, not too much

flat leaf parsley, half a bunch,

salt and pepper, freshly ground

1-2 teaspoons sugar or possibly a touch of honey, depending upon the carrots

Directions follow on next page,

Salade de carottes râpées

David Bovitz writes of his recipe: If I had to compile a list of the top five **National Dishes of France**, right up there would be **carottes râpées**, or **grated carrot salad**. And it's everywhere. You'll find it on many café and bistro menus, charcuteries sell it by the kilo, and even mega-supermarkets add a few extra ingredients for 'safekeeping' and sell it packed up in rectangular plastic containers, ready to go. Which, I probably don't need to add, should be avoided at all costs.

If you order **salade de carottes râpée** in a restaurant, you'll just get a pile of carrots with a wedge of lemon on the side. My frugal grandmother would've flipped; "Why order something you can make at home?" she'd say to me if I ordered something like, say...a nice-looking fruit salad in a restaurant. I don't know the answer to that.

But I do know sometimes there's nothing more satisfying than a simple pile of grated raw carrots, lightly dressed. And it's usually the least expensive item on the menu, so grandma can easily rest in peace.

I resist the urge to add things to it, although if you're itching to modify the recipe, you could grate in another raw vegetable, such as slivers of avocado, another *legume cru*, or top it with a flurry of crumbled feta. This is a great recipe to make when you have nothing on hand but a few carrots, which you can mix with regular pantry items. Unlike a lettuce salad, I find the crunchy carrots always filling and satisfying.

Parisians don't eat too many vegetables raw, with the exception of shredded carrots and celery root. A friend of mine's boyfriend is very French*, and she said he refuses to eat any vegetable unless it's cooked, except carrots. And only if they're grated.

But I guess I'm becoming one of them—in spite of my inability to master the conjugation of French verbs—because I, too, have developed a bit of an aversion to the half-cooked green beans that are sometimes referred to around here as "California-style."

This dish has all the things one doesn't necessarily associate with French food: it's portable enough to take on a picnic or road trip, it's a snap to put together in just a few minutes, and best of all, it's healthy. What's **not** to like about it?

And if I do say so, my partner **Romain** makes the best *carottes râpées* I've ever had. Of course, he doesn't follow a recipe: he mixes, tastes, adds more of something, then tastes

again.

And as a recipe writer, I love the fact that French cooks and published recipes sometimes call for vague quantities of things. It's something that would drive any measure-happy cook insane. In French recipes, a teaspoon is called **une cuillère à café** (a coffee spoon) and a tablespoon is **une cuillère à soupe** (a soup spoon.)**

The most important thing to a good bowl of **carottes râpées** is the size of **les carottes**. "Daveed, it is very important to grate the carrots *très fin!*", which his mother, who was standing right behind him in the kitchen, said, "*Oui! Oui!...c'est très importante!*"

So you want to begin with **seven large carrots**.

Peel and grate them in fine shreds using a hand grater or machine. I guess you could leave them unpeeled, but I've never seen unpeeled carrots served in Paris. But it's your call if you live elsewhere. Here, you gotta play by their rules, whether you like it or not.

Then chop a **half bunch of flat leaf parsley**, leaving it coarse. You don't want green powder, you want flakes of vibrant, earthy parsley

Make a dressing by mixing together the juice of two lemons, **2 to 3 soup spoons of olive oil**, **1 to 2 coffee spoons of sugar** (teaspoons), some **salt**, and **freshly ground pepper**. You can use a French juice glass with cartoon characters on it, if you want to be truly authentic.

Personally, I would add a dab of **Dijon mustard**, but have learned not to interfere when Romain is telling me something. I just nod, and let him keep going since I've learned that when Parisians are speaking, it's best to just let them keep going. If you do ever if you do manage to get a word in, they won't listen until they're done anyways, so why even bother.

Especially one in particular...

Toss the dressing with the carrots really well, then taste. If you have a fork, great.

If not, don't be afraid to use your fingers.

Adjust the seasonings at this point.

The carrots may need another hit of lemon or salt or olive oil. Don't overdress the salad; the carrots should be moistened and glistening, not swimming in dressing.

Once mixed, serve the carrot salad shortly thereafter. This feeds six to eight people as a side dish. If you want to make this advance, prepare the carrots and dressing separately, and mix together as close to serving time as possible.



RESEARCH BASED INFORMATION

Google came out and, with it, Wikipedia. Research was turned on its head. Now we are surrounded with so much information that it is overwhelming. With the good comes the not so good and the outright false. How is a consumer to know what is what?

Skip Richter had some ideas about this. He is a researcher out of A & M university. He had some suggestions

Choose sources that are not selling a product. If someone is telling you information, and the solution is to purchase their special product, move on. Their whole goal is to sell.

Avoid sources that have an ax to grind.

Avoid sources where the testimonial is the proof. “My Aunt Dorothy swore by this produce” only means she liked it a lot. There is no proof that it worked. or will work for anyone else. This again is an advertising ploy.

Finally, his greatest gem was sourcing. He gave an example of looking up lawn diseases. Say you have a patch of your lawn that has died and you are trying to figure what happened. If you put *lawn diseases* in a google search, lots of Ads will pop up first, followed by articles by big lawn companies, touting their products. It may take you a long time to work your way down to research based-article about lawn diseases without a product attached.

Instead, he suggested you put ‘lawn diseases’ in quotations, add a semicolon and a period then edu in lower case letters. Looks like this: “lawn diseases”:.edu

What will return are articles from universities about lawn diseases. Most start with a summary of their finding. The brief synopsis at the beginning of research articles can help you weed down to relevant articles about your area and your particular lawn disease.

Information in our Yerba is based on this kind of research. We do not formally cite the source, but **make a point** of telling you where the information came from.

The San Antonio Herb Society does not advise, recommend or prescribe herbs for medicinal use; Information is provided as an educational service and the San Antonio Herb Society cannot be held liable for its content. Please consult a health care provider before pursuing any herbal treatments.

Word for the month : adaptogens: tonic herbs that specifically balance and mitigate the effects of stress.

Meeting Minutes

AL DEL RIO'S CHICKENS

Meeting was called to order at 7 pm. Robin asked members to help find speakers for upcoming meetings. She reported briefly on the Earthwise Living Day at Leon Valley. She explained that the Spring Bloom had become a zoom event so our plans for a plant sale are postponed.

The speaker for the evening was introduced. Al Del Rio is a native of Texas. Originally from Eagle Pass, he has lived in San Antonio most of his life. At a very early age, he was given an Easter chick, which launched his career as a bird lover for life. He is also a very successful gardener and landscape designer.

Instead of telling us about gardens, he gave an information-packed and heartfelt talk about raising chickens. Over the years he has evolved a lot of techniques for success

Use welded wire fencing with plastic coating, the expense is well worth the investment in safety.

Fold the fence down at the ground to put an edge barrier to prevent raccoons and other digging predators from entering chicken coop.

chickens eat a wide variety of foods: watermelon, cantaloupes, papayas, sweet potatoes, frogs, spiders, rhinoceros grubs, cabbage loopers, crickets and all kinds of bugs.

He also feeds them high protein food designed for fighting cocks, the added clam shells contribute to calcium in the diet.

He buys crickets at a fish store. They are a treat for his hens.

There are a great variety of chickens. Standards and bantams and gargantuas. Some white, black, dotted. Some soft and fluffy. Some like to be cuddled others don't.

Egg laying varies with the season. Early spring is egg laying weather. The eggs can be a variety of colors, too. Some hens lay brown eggs, some white, pink, greenish or even bluish. There is a variety of chicken that is called Easter Egg because of the variety of colors they lay.

We also had a lively discussion about all the predators that threaten a chicken coop. Snakes, owls, raccoons, foxes. For each he has carefully crafted defenses.

Al told us the average life of a chicken was about four to eight years. However, many of his chickens have life from eleven to fourteen years. We all knew why: Al takes such kind care of his birds. He is an very attentive poulterer. We were so pleased he spent time with us sharing his love for these birds.



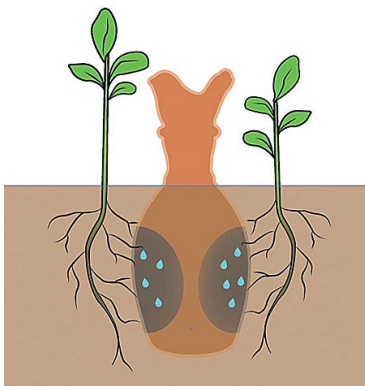
Cindy chose St. Patrick's Day for our theme. One of the advantages of being at the Garden Center is you always have a glorious and unobstructed view of the sunset.



OLLAS PRESENTATION IN NEW BRAUNFELS

March 9, Laura Eckert and Robin Maymar journeyed to New Braunfels to demonstrate how to create ollas out of two flowerpots. The Comal county Master Gardeners were hard at work in their demonstration room creating bird houses out of gourds they had grown and separating seeds for sale at their next plant sale.

This is only the second demonstration we have done on ollas, but it was a huge success.



Herb Society Board

President
Robin Maymar
robinmaymar@gmail.com

1st Vice-President (Programs) Position vacant

Treasurer Vacant

Secretary Volunteer at meeting

Membership Milan Maymar, protem

Publicity Vicki Jamvold

Our website: <https://sanantonioherbs.org>

TO DO IN THE APRIL GARDEN

You can sometimes count every orange on a tree,
but never all the trees in a single orange.

—A K Ramanujan, poet.(1929-1993)

This is the original version produced by Brian Townsend. We are leaving all the citations in, so you can see the sources. We have edited out some long pieces, that had been previously included, and it is still very long.

1st Week:

Yearling PURPLE MARTINS should still be arriving to colonize new breeding sites and will continue arriving for an additional 4 to 6 weeks (this means martins can be attracted to new housing through mid-May). - *PMA*

Our latest spring freezes have occurred during this week.

Stake Gladiolus as their flower spikes are forming, or grow them close together for mutual support.

BALL MOSS does not threaten oak trees, but if the appearance bothers you, control it by treating now with Kocide fungicide (baking soda is also effective). Follow label instructions.

Mow live oak leaves and let them decompose on the lawn or use them for mulch.

Junior petunia is a hardy reseeding plant for color in cool and hot weather. It can be planted now.

Plant beans, sweet corn, summer squash, radishes, carrots and beets in the organically prepared vegetable garden. Recommended tomato varieties are Merced, Celebrity, Carnival, Surefire, Jackpot, Whirlaway, Sun Master or Heatwave (some new, some discontinued).

If your pecan trees showed small leaves and few nuts last year, the trees probably need zinc. Spray it on the emerging leaves or apply a chelated zinc source to the soil.

Resist the urge to fertilize your lawn until you have mowed "lawn" grass (not annual grasses and weeds) twice. - *CF*

Some favorite shrubs: Copper plants (colorful foliage) and lantana (colorful flowers) can be planted.

Select and plant water-saving ornamental grasses to add height, texture and color to landscape. - *EO*

Spray pecan trees with fungicide to prevent pecan scab, vein spot and downy spot.

Spray pear trees with a bactericidal spray if FIRE BLIGHT has been a problem in the past. - *TAE*

Direct seed warm-season flowers such as marigold, zinnia, larkspur and moss rose in well-prepared beds.

Watch for APHIDS on new growth. Tender growth on roses is especially susceptible. Use general insecticides. For organic control, try insecticidal soap or neem oil. - LR

Watch Redtip photinias for ENTOMOSPORIUM FUNGAL LEAF SPOT (maroon spots, yellowish growth). Control is difficult, problem is internal. Banner or Daconil are best (infected branches should be pruned out; clean pruners with each cut to prevent spreading the infection - me).

Keep a look out for LEAFROLLERS on cannas, that tie leaves together, resulting in rows of holes across surfaces of leaves. Use Orthene with 1 or 2 drops of liquid detergent to hold spray on leaves. - NS

Keep pulling weeds- don't let them go to seed. - AJW

To keep your ever-blooming roses flowering longer than any other in town, try this terrific tonic: dissolve 3 Tbsp. of brewer's yeast in 2 gal. water and soak the roots of each bush after their first blooming.

Fast Flower Feeder Tonic: take 2 Tbsp. of hydrogen peroxide, 2 Tbsp. of liquid dish soap (*1 tsp., if concentrated), 4 tsp. of instant tea granules, 1 Tbsp. of clear corn syrup, 1 Tbsp. of unflavored gelatin; 1 can of beer, 2 Tbsp. of ammonia, 2 Tbsp. of whiskey, 2 gal. of warm water. Mix them all together and feed your perennials and bulbs every two weeks in the morning. Then step back and watch your blooms soar!

Fragrant Pest Fighter Tonic: take $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh tansy, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh lavender, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh sage, 1 tsp. of Murphy's Oil Soap, boiling water. Place the herbs in a 1 quart container. Fill with boiling water, cover and let set until cool. Add 1/8 cup of this mix to 2 cups of water and the Murphy's Oil Soap. Pour in a handheld sprayer, mist the plants and the pest will scam.

If you snooze, you lose . . . in summer that is . . . as hungry APHIDS, WHITEFLIES and SPIDER MITES make short work out of your prized perennials. But it's quick and easy to bug-proof your beauties with my "Summer Soap-&-Oil Spray". Using 1 cup of vegetable oil and 1 Tbsp. of liquid dish soap (*). Mix them together, then add 2 tsp. of mix to 1 cup of water in a handheld sprayer. Mix well and spray away. - JB

In Our Rose Garden: With the first blooms all around and rose shows just around the corner, there are duties we need to take care of to insure that our gardens are in tip-top shape. Three keys to good spring roses are watering, feeding and spraying.

A) Watering - Maintain a good moisture level in the top 6 to 8 inches of your rose bed where those important feeder roots are located. If the rains have been generous, keep tabs on the dampness of the soil in the rose beds using the best "moisture indicator" of all - your finger!

B) Feeding - Are you interested in maintaining good bush growth and having cut roses for the house and color in the yard? Then continue to feed with a dry or granular feed (this can be organic or chemical) once a month. Use one cup per plant around the drip-line of

the bush. Soluble feeders need to apply your favorite feed every week giving each bush at least one gallon poured around the drip-line of the bush. With our spring rose show right around the corner, you might try giving your roses a mix of the following to add to the size, substance and color of the bloom. Two weeks prior to the show, mix in a 32 gal. garbage can: 2 cups of *Superbloom* (or similar 12-55-6 formula); 1 cup of fish emulsion; 1 cup of *Sprint 330* (or similar iron chelate). Stir well for mixing and give each bush at least one gallon of the mix. Give miniatures one quart each.

C) Spraying - Remember, prevention is the name of the game. Spraying every 5 to 7 days should keep your rose beds disease-free.

1. BLACKSPOT & MILDEW - mix *Triforine* (formerly *Funginex*) at 1 Tbsp. per gal. of spray (consider rotating your spray material every month or so with *Immunex*, or other good fungicide. Baking soda or potassium bicarbonate has shown to be very effective, as well as *Neem oil* for use in organic gardens). Make sure to spray the top and bottom of the foliage.

2. THRIPS - mist only the buds and opening flowers to keep your blooms clean from this culprit. Use either *Orthene liquid* @ 2 Tbsp. or *Orthene powder* @ 2 tsp. per gal. of spray mixture (*Spinosad* is labeled for use on thrips).

3. SPIDER MITES - Though mites usually aren't visible to the naked eye, their damage is. As they feed on plant tissue, the pests inject toxins into the plants, causing white or yellow dots on leaves (If infestation great enough, you might notice webbing on the underside of the lower leaves). Either water-wash the bottom side of the foliage on a 3 day interval for nine days, or spray the bottom side of the foliage with a labeled miticide following label directions (liquid seaweed is every effective against spider mites).

D) The Fine Art of Pruning - Knowing why you grow roses dictates your plan for managing the flower production. Finger pruning is the process of rubbing off unwanted new shoots so you get the shape of bush you want and the bush can be manipulated to produce a few "large" blooms or many small blooms. If you decide to do nothing, there will be an overabundance of new stems pointed in every direction with a large number of small flowers. This is perfect for the person who wants to limit their time doing rose chores if they just want lots of color in the landscape. A small amount of finger pruning and clipping (reducing the number of new shoots per stem) can direct the growth outward and upward developing a shapelier bush with good color and some nice, long stems for cutting. The serious exhibitor will only allow 2 or 3 new stems to develop per can to get the large, showy flowers.

New shoots that do not seem vigorous, small in diameter, short and have a brown tip rather than a bud should be removed cleanly back to the cane. These are blind shoots and will never make a flower. New shoots that are a foot long or less that form a bud should be cut in half. These types of growth will only take away precious nutrients from the other flowers, so why not recycle them to get a jump on the second cycle. * Remember to water your bushes thoroughly before feeding or spraying! Visit their web site @ www.sarosesociety.org.

A YEAR IN THE ROSE GARDEN: - AJW

Watch for spider mites. If you think you do not have them by the end of this month it is likely you either have sprayed, washed with water or just don't see well. If the roses are not doing as well as you think they should, take another look or maybe have a Consulting Ro-

sarian come and look.

Watch for basal breaks. These are large vigorous shoots coming from the bud union or from within about 5 inches of it. They are easily broken off so arrange to tie them to a stake or another cane until they have hardened. They are valuable to the life and longevity of the bush, so take care of them. When they are about 2 feet high it is useful to pinch them off at the first blunt bud, thus encouraging strong branches and preventing candelabras.

Avoid cutting blooms with long stems from new bushes. Cut very short stems or snap blooms off at the peduncle and float in a bowl.

On established bushes, unless the bloom is needed for a show, take no more stem than necessary. Leave two good sets of leaves on the bush. If the bush is well grown this will provide ample stems for arranging (and if it is not well grown, the blooms should not be cut with long stems anyhow).

A quick and simple way to cut spent blooms ("dead-head" as our British and Canadian friends say), is to snap off the faded bloom at the peduncle. The roses repeat faster and seem to grow better than if we go through and cut down farther on the stems.

Remove blind shoots and leaf rosettes. A leaf rosette is a cluster of leaves, usually far down the cane, which has no bloom bud. Blind shoots are stems which come out and taper down to nothing with no bloom bud. A cane which has nothing but blind shoots should be removed at the source.

Lightly stir the mulch. Many mulches pack down and need to be fluffed up for better insulation and better water penetration.

Add to your mulch. If it is allowing weeds to grow or seems to be thin, more mulch will help kill weeds and keep the ground cooler.

Organic Rose Program - HG (see Feb. To Do List for complete program)

Watering: If possible, save and use rainwater. If not, add 1 Tbsp. of natural apple cider vinegar per gal. of water. If all else fails, just use tap water but, in any case don't over water. Avoid salty well water.

For best results foliar feed with Garrett Juice every 2 weeks, but at least once a month. When soil is healthy, nothing but Garrett Juice is needed in the spray.

Pest Control Program: Add the following to Garrett Juice (visit his web site to get his recipe or pick it up at a local nursery) and spray as needed.

- 1) Garlic tea or mild vinegar- 1/4cup/gal. or label directions for minor insect or disease infestations.
- 2) Potassium bicarbonate - 1 rounded tbsp. /gal. for minor diseases.
- 3) Liquid biostimulants - Use per label - Medina Soil Activator, or similar product.
- 4) Neem or plant oil products - Use per label directions for more serious insect and disease infestations.
- 5) For thrips, apply beneficial nematodes to the soil in early spring.

6) Fish emulsion - 2oz. /gal. for additional nutrients (may not be needed when using compost tea)

In Our Herb Garden: It's not too late to set out transplants of perennial herbs. * From now and throughout the summer, plant basil, which likes the warm weather. * Cool weather annuals planted late this month will go to seed near the end of June (examples are dill, cilantro, parsley). * Weed and water as necessary. * Enjoy your garden, everything is taking off! - *Herbs: A Resource Guide for San Antonio*. Visit their web site @ www.sanantonioherbs.org.

Did You Know, if over applied, chemical fertilizers may make plants more susceptible to disease? The fertilizers can do this in part by killing off microorganisms that protect plants from certain diseases. Many plant diseases are controlled by antibiotic-producing bacteria or fungi that exist in the plant roots. - *TGS*

2nd WEEK:

*** Poteet Strawberry Festival ***

Continue weekly spraying of roses (see notes in "In Our Rose Garden") & other "formal" flower gardens. Set up a certain time to do it and stay with it (after a time it becomes routine and not so much a chore). Spray time does not need to be boring - it is the time for looking, planning, reflecting or just plain enjoying being out with the roses. - *AJW*

Aerate lawns at least once each year; use a core-extracting aerator. Top dress it with compost or a compost/sand mix to revitalize the grass.

It is time to put bougainvillea, plumeria, hibiscus and other tropical plants outside. (This would be a good time to take "all" your potted plants outside and either repot with fresh soil; or with a garden hose flush all those mineral salts from the old fertilizers out of the potting soil and start a new feeding program with them, maybe even give their leaves a little bath. - *me*)

Keep Easter lilies moist and in a bright room for long, indoor life. After the flowers decline, place them outside in a location with morning sun.

For color in the shade, use coleus, begonias, pentas and annual salvia.

Tomatoes can be planted in the garden now. Mulch them with leaves, cocoa shells, lawn clippings or other material to avoid blossom end rot.

Wisteria must be pruned after their flowering season, even in years when they fail to bloom. To prune them significantly at any other time would reduce or prevent their blooms the next spring. Keep the plant's natural shape and avoid excessive cutting where necessary to control size. Apply iron/sulfur material to wisterias to combat iron deficiency caused by South Texas soils. (Carolina jessamine, spiraea, quince, Indian hawthorn and Lady Banks roses are some examples of shrubs that should also be pruned back after they have bloomed. - *EO*)

To increase the germination rate on Texas mountain laurel seeds, collect and plant the seeds after the pods reach full size but before they dry out (still green).

The oak blooms that are littering your yard, decomposes quickly in the compost pile. Mix

them with the oak leaves. - *CF*

Vegetable gardens need fertilizer every 3 weeks. Use a product with a 19-5-9 (3-1-2 ratio of nutrients).

Sow seeds for sunflowers and gomphrena (bachelor buttons).

Plant okra and pumpkin seeds and sweet potato transplant (slips). - *EO*

Lightly fertilize shrubs and evergreens around their bases to encourage spring green-up.

Keep mower blades sharp. A mulching blade will eliminate the need to rake or bag grass clippings.

Rotate houseplants so each side receives its share of light. This encourages even growth and a balanced shape.

As the sun's rays strengthen and daylight hours lengthen, plants such as African violets may need to be moved from southern facing windows to prevent leaf scorch. - *TAE*

It's time to fertilize your lawn. Most soil tests in the area reveal high levels of phosphorus and potassium. If you have not tested your soil for several years and you have applied 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio fertilizers (example: 15-5-10, 16-4-8 or 19-5-9) for several years, use a high-nitrogen fertilizer such as 21-0-0 this year. (*Do not feed Buffalo grass - *CF*) - *LR*

If you fertilize your tomato plants heavily with a nitrogen fertilizer at planting time, you will likely get very large plants but few tomatoes. Instead, wait until your plants have produced small tomatoes (about the size of a large marble) and then apply a handful or so of fertilizer to each plant every week during the growing season. You may not have 10-foot-tall plants but you should have buckets of vine-ripened fruit to enjoy and share with friends and neighbors. - *TGS*

Many people think that moon gardening works because all water is affected by the movement of the moon and plants are mostly water. Both the sun and moon affect water through their magnetic pull but the moon is much closer to the earth hence its influence is stronger.

Did you know it is possible to have a beautiful garden without a lot of fuss, and have it do good for the environment by using less water and fossil fuels, reducing use of fertilizers and pesticides that can get into the groundwater, and reducing the amount of yard waste that goes into landfills? The EPA provides green gardening information at the following Web pages:

www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden (green landscaping)

www.epa.gov/region3/p2/garden.htm (pollution prevention in gardening and landscaping)

www.epa.gov/p2week/ingarden.htm (pollution prevention in the garden)

www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/green/pubs/home-gs.pdf (greenscaping)

www.epa.gov/pesticides/controlling/garden.htm (controlling pests)

www.epa.gov/osw/specials/funfacts/may.htm (garden waste)

www.epa.gov/agriculture/tcop.html (composting)

www.epa.gov/owow/nps/toolbox/other/KSMO_buildarainbarrel.pdf (how to build your own rainbarrel)

Note: Not all information containing in the above Web pages may be appropriate for Texas gardeners. - TGS

The Red-Winged Blackbirds will be moving on to hoard other feeders further north, but they'll be ba-a-a-ck! - me

3rd Week:

* * * FIESTA * * *

Keep an eye out for the Lyrids Meteor Shower. Check when it's due. - THMag

Plant basil, begonia, caladium and impatiens in prepared beds. Warm-weather annuals such as zinnias, lantana and purslane can be planted now. The semperfloren begonias (wax begonias, available at most nurseries) can be grown in sun or shade. Plant them now in sunny locations so they can put on growth before the heat arrives.

Use spinach and cole crops. All except Brussels sprouts are declining quickly from heat and aphids.

To control SQUASH VINE BORERS on melons and squash, apply thiodan dust every week at the growing point.

Perennial Daffodil foliage should be allowed to die back totally. Do not remove it while it shows any sign of green (browned tips can be trimmed).

Mulch newly planted tomatoes to conserve water and prevent blossom end rot.

Mow St. Augustine grass at 3", Bermuda at 1", Zoysia at 2" and buffalo at 4". Mowing frequently reduces weeds. Water the lawn only when it needs it (walk across the grass, if your footprint springs up, the grass has plenty of water). -CF

Control garden SLUGS, SNAILS and PILLBUGS with slug & snail baits. - EO

Plant annuals for instant color. Select short, compact plants (Tropical annuals such as Mexican Heather, bougainvilleas and allamandas can be planted for flowers all summer. - LR)

Turn your compost pile to speed decomposition.

It is time to plant okra, Southern peas and ornamental cotton.

Early May is the best time to plant caladiums in our region (resist planting them too early if the ground is moist and cool). Select caladium tubers while ample stock is available. - TAE

4th Week:

Plant heat-tolerant perennials like China Doll, Firebush, Gingers, Lantana and Mex. Bird-of-Paradise.

Prune spring-blooming plants as the last blooms fade. An exception is Texas mountain laurels, which don't respond well to pruning; just remove any dead wood from the tree.

Harvest columbine seeds before pods open. Put the stalks in a brown paper bag so the will

collect in the sack when they open.

Cyclamen declines quickly in heat. The bulbs need to be stored until next fall. An easy storage method is to turn pots on their sides in a corner of the yard. As long as the bulbs stay dry, they will not rot.

APHIDS, feasting on fresh growth, can be controlled with insecticidal soap, Malathion or other labeled insecticides. As hot days come, arrange to spray liquid fertilizers & insecticides as needed) in the morning or evenings. When the temperature gets into the 90's, almost any spray will burn.

It is time to fertilize tomatoes when the first fruits set. Spread a half-cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer around the drip line. Check stems of tomato plants just below the soil line in search of cutworms. Remove the cutworms by hand.

When onion tops fall over, it's time to harvest. Put the bulbs on the surface of the garden bed for a day to harden off, and then store them in mesh bags in a dry room.

Mow whenever grass has grown $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{5}{8}$ " and let clippings fall into turf.

San Antonio area loquat trees have a beautiful crop of tasty fruits. Use them fresh or for preserves.

Spray peach, plum, pear and apple trees every week with an insecticide and use a fungicide every two weeks if you want blemish-free fruit.

Arizona ash leaves may show brown spots and drop because of anthracnose. It is not a major problem. The trees will recover without spraying. - CF

Prune elaeagnus, pyracantha, ligature and photinias shrubs frequently if they are growing vigorously. - EO

Last week of male oak trees pollinating your sinuses. - SB

Turn the material in your compost pile to speed up decomposition. Water as needed.

If you have spring vegetable or flower seeds that were not planted, put them in a zip-lock plastic bag (wrap the seeds in a paper towel first - me) and store in the refrigerator until needed. - TAE

Plant watermelon and cantaloupe.

Apply iron products to correct iron chlorosis. Keep iron off of walkways and masonry because of staining.

Plant English or Algerian ivy, Asian jasmine or mondo grass in deep shade where lawn grass does poorly. - LR

* In updating this collections of useful tips, I have come across several comments, instructions and chemicals that are being replaced with newer techniques and materials. In some cases, I do not want to change what others have written, but I need to bring "them" up-to-date by putting a "(?)" right behind the point in question and maybe adding my own two-cent's worth. - me

Many thanks to my contributors for sharing their wisdom so I can learn and share it with you.

PMA - Purple Martin Association; visit their web site @ www.purplemartin.org.

CF - Calvin Finch, (former) Bexar Co. extension agent for horticulture, Texas Agricultural Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

EO - Edna Ortiz, (former) Bexar Co. extension agent for horticulture, Texas Agricultural Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

TAE - Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Bexar County (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

LR - Lynn Rawe, (former) Bexar Co. extension agent for horticulture, Texas Cooperative Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News); visit their web site @ www.bexar-tx.tamu.edu.

NS - Neil Sperry, Texas horticulturalists, Publisher "Neil Sperry's GARDENS" and contributor to S.A. Express-News. Visit his web site @ www.neilsperry.com.

AJW - A.J. "Pop" Warner, Consulting Rosarian, writer of the book "A Year in the Rose Garden" and others.

JB - Jerry Baker, America's Master Gardener, aka "The Yardener".

HG - John Howard Garrett, aka the "Dirt Doctor"; visit his web site @ www.dirtdoctor.com.

THMag - Texas Highways Magazine; visit their web site @ www.texashighways.com.

SB - Steve Brown, meteorologist with KSAT; visit their web site @ www.ksat.com.

TGS - Texas Gardener Seeds,

me - Brian D. Townsend, Master Gardener, Consulting Rosarian; e-mail me @ briandt@juno.com.

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