



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY  
 APRIL 2024

Dr. Ferhat Ozturk, Assistant Professor of Practice will speak on Medicinal use of Honey: Evidence-based Applications. Honey has been used for centuries as a natural remedy for various ailments, including preventing and treatments of wounds, infections, diabetes, cancer, asthma and much more. In this presentation, Dr. Ozturk will give a brief outline about use of honey as a therapeutic agent for centuries, as well as provide evidence-based information about the bioactivity potential of different honeys and use of honey for wound healing in clinical settings. He will also briefly outline the medical uses of other honeybee products, such as propolis, royal jelly, pollen, bee venom, and wax, which is called apitherapy. The more science we can find about herbs and natural remedies the better. Dr. Ozturk will be speaking our language. Come join us.



**SAN ANTONIO  
 HERB SOCIETY**  
 Mark your calendar for our  
 next meeting  
**APRIL 11, 2024**  
 3310 N. New Braunfels  
 San Antonio, 79209

Doors open 6 Buffet 6:30  
 Presentation 7

All meetings are free and open to the public

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# Culinary Contributions

## Dry Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon  
½ teaspoon ground ginger  
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
½ teaspoon salt

## Wet Ingredients

¾ cup canola oil  
4 large eggs  
1 ½ cups light brown sugar  
½ cup granulated white sugar  
½ cup unsweetened applesauce  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
3 cups carrots, grated, lightly packed

## SPRING CARROT CAKE

### Instructions

Preheat oven to 375° F. Spray two 9” round cake pans with nonstick cooking spray, then line with parchment paper circles.

Wisk the dry ingredients in your mixing bowl.

In a separate large bowl mix dry ingredients.

Add grated carrots to the wet ingredients until combined.

Combine wet ingredients with dry ingredients. Make sure not to over mix which will make a dense gummy cake.

Divide the cake batter between the two pans.

Bake for 30-35 minutes. Test for doneness with a toothpick inserted in center. It should come clean.

Allow cake to cool slightly in the pan, then remove and transfer onto wire rack to cool completely.

## Cream Cheese Frosting

Beat the cream cheese until smooth; add butter and continue to mix until well combined.

Mix in powdered sugar and vanilla extract, thoroughly mix.

For a little extra decoration, toast and chop pecans or walnuts to sprinkle around the edge of the cake.

## Assemble the Layers

Cut the top of one cake to even it out and use on the bottom layer.

Add frosting then top with the second layer.

Finish frosting.

1 package 8 oz. cream cheese  
¼ cup unsalted butter, room temp.  
1 cup powdered sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

## UPCOMING EVENTS

WEED AND GLOAT FOR APRIL on the 29th



NEXT GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY APRIL 11

EARTHDAY AT WOODLAWN LAKE PARK. April 20

Earthday is more of a Public Relations event. We set up early in the morning and just visit with people, letting them know that there is an Herb Society and it is open to the public. It is a good time to tell people our “Why.” We will have a seed planting event for kids, information about herbs and presentations on Ollas and how they can help conserve water. Sign up sheets at April meeting.

EARTHWISE LIVING DAY Recap

Cindy and Robin set up the day before. We had the same booth as last year. This year, we did things a little differently Cindy and Becky arrived early and ran the booth until Joy and Robin could carpool there. When Robin called to see if there was anything she could bring, she got a very short “So busy I can’t talk. Don’t need anything” The whole day was like that. Sales were so brisk, we hardly had a chance to wander around to visit the other exhibits. There is one measly picture– of the booth after all the other booths had closed... and there are still customers at our booth!



SAWS SPRING BLOOM MARCH 9

We still don’t seem to have our coordination together. We waited to hear from Nature’s Herb Farm that the truck had been dispatched, finally gave up and drove over to SAWS only to find that he had come and already gone, leaving an invoice. We carefully checked the order and put all our trays in alphabetical order inside the tent where they had been placed. Mr Solis asked us to arrive early to set up all the plants outside, suggested 7 am. So, we obediently arrived at 7. “Why are you here so early?” he asked. “ We’re just uncoordinated, I guess.”



The SAWS volunteer helpers had pulled all the flats out, tossed them on the ground in no particular order, so we had to, again, alphabetize the trays. Cindy arrived and gave us a hand. We decided not to put up the tent as the wind was a steady thirty-five miles an hour. And it kept up the whole time we were there. It is a very good thing that we had brought the famous Box of Rocks. We put rocks on price lists, rocks on signs, rocks on bowls of bay leaves and rocks on the pencils so they would not roll away.

It was so cold, we finally sent Cindy and Patsy into the building with scissors and tape to finish making all the plant signs.

When the sun came out it tried to warm us up, but it did not do a very good job. Thousands upon thousands of customers came to SAWS Spring Bloom. They people of SAWS do a bang-up job of guiding them through the first free plant tables, handing out big orange recyclable bags.

Some new firsts for Herb Society. The Internet Gods have smiled upon us an we now have a working

Venmo account, which we used all day to great success. And Linda and Jennifer Sierra joined us for sales, as did, new member, Tamara. She was not so sure about selling herbs as she is new to the subject, but she did an excellent job as cashier. Many, many thanks to all three. Also thanks to Esther, Marsha, Sandra, Joy, Patsy, Becky and Milan.

Again, we were so busy that it was hard to take a picture. We had a near- sellout. Ended up with about 18 herbs, who found new homes at various locations. The ollas were also a near sell-out. We had one left and found one that was cracked and needed repair.

We made many new friends, handed out lots of invitations to visit our next meeting, returned home wind-blown, sunburned, tired and happy.



### MEG WARE FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

First of all, the editor apologizes. We usually run a re-cap of the meeting with follow-up information. If someone missed the meeting or wanted to refer to How to Cut Roses, it would be there in the Yerba. However, there was an Earthwise Living Day, and an apartment move, and numerous time draining things, so it did not get included last month. Our apologies. We have edited out all the events that have passed.

Meg Ware, from the San Antonio Rose Society was introduced. Meg is a certified Rosarian and member of the National Rose Society as well as our local chapter. They meet on the first Monday of the month here at the Garden Center. If you have questions about your rose plants, they are available for consultation.

Meg taught us how to prune our roses. It is important to stimulate growth in roses by pruning them early in the year when they are dormant. February 14 is the rule of thumb date, that reminds us to prune. It is normally very cold at this point. The current year is the exception.

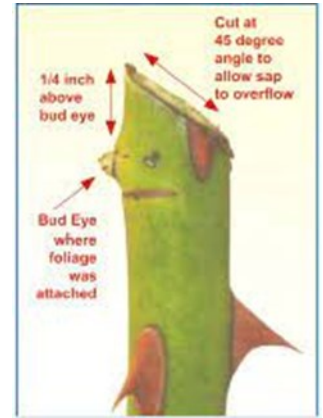
At this time, prune anywhere from 1/3 to 1/2 of the length of the canes. This looks severe, but it helps the plant to concentrate on new growth. Later, after the plants have bloomed, dead-head the blossoms by removing them. This is a second type of pruning. Then in the fall, 1<sup>st</sup> of September, also prune, but not as severely.

Most roses are hybridized; many are grafted onto strong root stock. Basal breaks refer to new shoots, soon to be producing canes, which arise from the graft union.. These should not be confused with "suckers" which arise from the rootstock below the graft union.

When pruning, look for the 'bud eye'. Make a cut that slants going away from the bud eye. Bud eye: A bud eye lies near every point where a leaf is attached to a cane. Other than basal breaks emerging directly from the bud union, bud eyes are the only points from which a new cane will grow. Pruning canes at a 45° angle just above a bud eye will encourage new growth to start more swiftly.



This illustration helps us see how to cut and identifies the bud eye. Cut the rose with the slant going away from the bud eye so that water will flow off of the cut. There is no need to seal the pruned branch, however, before e you ever cut the rose, sterilize your pruners with alcohol. If you have borers you can seal with glue, paint or nail polish.



Climbing roses will not attach themselves to things as peas or cucumbers may. You have to support them and provide connections. Climbers should be pruned after they have bloomed.

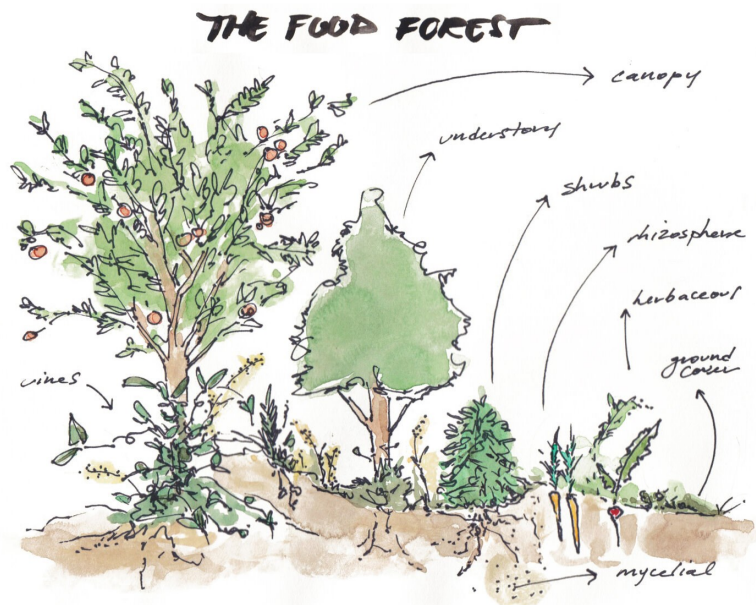
# Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes-  
 notes taken by Joy Salmon  
 14 March 2024

The meeting was called to order by president, Robin Maymar, at 7:08.

She gave a brief recap of the sales at Spring Bloom and Earthwise Living day, which were both very good events.

She introduced our speaker, Brenda Nelson, from Edible Landscapes. Brenda had miniature sunflower seeds for us, and an informational handout about her company. They started the business two years ago. Using permaculture principles and food forest designs, her company promotes the



benefits of growing food on your own property.

They install edible landscapes working with a company out of Florida called Food forest Abundance. This company designs all over the United States. She had two examples of plats that have been installed. They included a key to each plant, and a color coded map of the whole yard, house and hardscape. Things they survey the property for are sun hours, rain availability, and soil conditions. The sun patterns help determine where plants can be placed. Brenda and her husband, David do the physical installs after the company designs the layout.

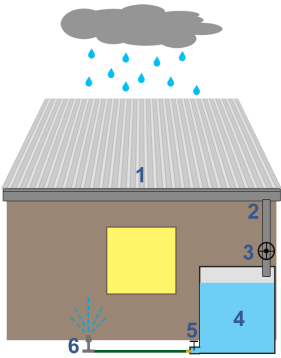
Food forest is a new term. “Food Forest,” also called “forest gardens” or “edible forests,” is the shorthand for the practice of cultivating forest ecosystems for human food production, according to Garden City Harvest. Brenda had a nice illustration of the layers of a forest. Each layer supports different types of plantings.

She referred to this as a guild. For example, an apple tree guild. A guild is a community of plants that grow and support each other by recycling nutrients back into the soil, providing shade and conserving water, attracting beneficial insects, repelling pests and diseases, building soil and preventing soil erosion. This is a principle of permaculture.

A simple illustration is the Three Sisters. Stacking corn which grows on a long stalk, beans, which grow up the stalk and squash which provides shade on the ground that keeps weeds down and shades the earth to keep moisture in the ground.



Brenda showed us raised beds, filled with layers of cardboard, then branches, mulch, and soil for the plants. They used either metal or wood for the raised beds.



She then discussed the benefits of raising your own food: after initial investment the price is quite modest, you have the security of knowing where your food comes from and how it has been treated, and the food from the garden, fresh, has the best flavor of all. In conclusion, a food forest of vegetables and fruit and nut trees can pay for itself over time. There are also health benefits of doing gardening, as well as emotional and spiritual benefits.

She encouraged us to get started. You do not have to hire a team; you can do the research yourself. You can investigate online, there are plenty of Youtube tutorials on how to make an edible landscape. You also do not have to do all of the gardening at once, which her company does. You can choose a spot and just begin there with some potted plants and trees in tubs. If you do not have space, maybe a community garden would be available. It is important to have clear goals in mind, and to understand the sun, soil and water availability of your space. One difficulty might be your Homeowners Association (HOA), which she encouraged us to see if there is a work-around. If you are not allowed to use your front yard, perhaps the backyard will do.

She also showed us her rainwater catchment system, which was facilitated by a pumping system. She also had transformed a backyard garage into a greenhouse to great productivity.

There were a number of questions that members of the audience asked.

The meeting closed at 8:40

The technology team, Becky, Robin, Milan and Joy did a magnificent job. The projector was in focus, the two microphones worked so both audience in person and on Zoom could hear. The Zoom people could see the illustrations on line, but not the speaker. The sound systems was well tuned and not too loud. Unfortunately, our system for recording the meetings onto Zoom did not work. So we will try again at the next meeting. But Kudo's to all who are helping get the technology going.



## WEED AND GLOAT MARCH



What seeds did we plant last month? Marigolds that had been planted last year and went to seed. Well, they did not come up. Might not be good timing. Might be too early (although there is one brave plant with a yellow flower at the other end of the bed) Might be that the amateur weeders see a nice clear spot (where we planted the seeds) and stand there to weed the rest of the garden. They did not come up. We left it alone. Maybe next month?

Population of poppies is way down from last year. Our tactic of removing poppies from the edge of the bed has paid off. Last year you could not see the garden for the poppies. This year, no problem.

The Gardeners (Mr. LeBay and Celeste Spivey) have brought us herbs to transplant: 12 thyme, 2 Greek oregano, 3 basil, 4 fern leaf dill, a red flowered mother of thyme, 2 Goodwin Creek lavenders, 1 Foxley Thyme and 2 oregano.

A visitor with a toddler came by. She works for an oven company and is always making pizzas as demonstrations. She told us about all the herbs she piles on the pizzas, and how successful that is.



A crowd of school children came by with a guide speaking through a microphone- what a clever device- the kids could hear well and get a lot more out of the tour. They came by twice more with the same guide, we realized that he was taking different groups on the tour. We gave the teachers a bag of mint, roots attached, to take back and plant somewhere for fun.



Basil and Mary Jo arrived with their daughter Eva. Wonderful to have more youthful help in the garden. They helped us remove yet another large swath of mint and replace with our thyme. Pictured above.

The purple martins are swarming around their luxury quarters in the garden. They are probably just the scouts, staking out their territory, waiting for the little woman to come along soon and help set up housekeep-

ing. Martins eat an enormous amount of mosquitoes. If you can find an open area to set up a purple martin house it can really help keep insects down.

Helichrysum Italicum, the “Curry Plant” is growing well. Indian curry is made with all sorts of spices. Starting with turmeric, coriander, peppers; each curry is unique to the maker and depends on the blend of spices. Curry has a distinctive flavor, unmistakable in foods. The “Curry Plant” just happens to smell like curry. It is not used in the making of curry, although it has been used in some food dishes.

11:30 We broke up the Weed phase of the garden and trooped over to headquarters, to meet with Chloe Blumenberg and Celeste Spivey. They were very kind to help teach us access *My Impact* on our phones, find our Usernames, and help make Passwords, and then make new passwords, and then figure out why that did not work and make more new Passwords. Eventually, and not without frustration, we all go onto *My Impact* to log volunteer hours. We have discovered that this process seems ONLY to work on the phone. It must be a whole different thing on the computer. So stick to your phone if you can. We send many thanks to Chloe and Celeste for a hard working hour.

## 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 26

We meet at 9 A.M.

Contact [robinmaymar@gmail.com](mailto:robinmaymar@gmail.com) for

Gear we need to bring .

See you then.

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.

## Herb Society Board

**President**

Robin Maymar

[robinmaymar@gmail.com](mailto:robinmaymar@gmail.com)

**1st Vice-President (Programs)** **Position vacant**

**Treasurer** Vacant

**Secretary** Volunteer at meeting

**Membership** Milan Maymar, protem

**Publicity—All members**

Our website: [https://  
sanantonioherbs.org](https://sanantonioherbs.org)





## FROM THE PREZ

Quick question: what are three good reasons to be a teacher?

June, July and August used to be the answer. Now it is June, July and just part of August. Times change. Speaking of which, we are thinking of taking off June, July and August and starting up Herb Society in September. Our hope is that with a time off, when we come back together we will be energized and hopefully new people will join us and we can get this club to grow in the cool fall weather. If you have comments or suggestions, please be prepared to share at the April meeting.

This does not mean that Weed and Gloat is off the hook. Weeds still grow in the summer, and coffee still needs to be consumed during the Gloat phase of the process.

And the newsletter, in a smaller version, will still tell us what to do in the garden during the summer.

Sometimes the herb garden just looks very green. Herbalists can differentiate among those greens, but to the average eye, it just looks green. So, to introduce a little color into the newsletter, and to answer some persistent questions...

## **Bougainvillea! Grows well in San Antonio**

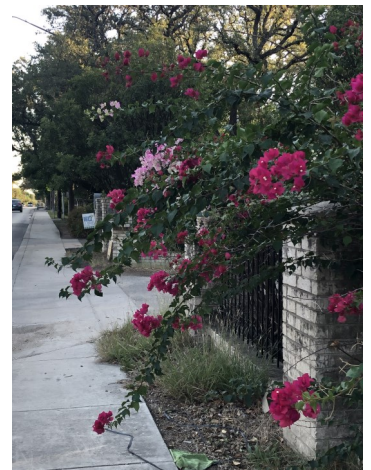
Sourced mostly from the internet

When planting bougainvillea in San Antonio, Texas, it's important to choose a location with full sun exposure, well-draining soil, and protection from harsh winds. Full sun means at least 6-8 hours of sunshine; less than that and you will have a beautiful green plant, but little if any phosphorescent color.

Where should you not plant bougainvillea? Plant on higher ground or hillsides, not in water-logged or low areas where water might collect. They will grow best when given enough space to spread out. (The bougainvillea pictured are located on N. New Braunfels south of the intersection at Nacogdoches.

Does bougainvillea need a trellis? Bougainvillea are beautiful vine-like shrubs that come in a variety of vibrant colors and make for a stunning statement in any home or garden. They prefer mild winter areas and can grow against a fence, building, on a trellis, in containers or as a hedge.

How long does it take for bougainvillea to establish? A newly planted bougainvillea shrub usually takes about 1 to 2 years to become fully established and start producing significant blooms. The exact time frame can vary based on factors like the plant's health, care, and growing conditions.



Water every other day – not every day. Be sure the dirt in the pot feels dry before you water. Water large pots until water runs out the drainage holes in the bottom of the pot. Bougainvillea are a bit drought tolerant and do not like to be over-watered. Usually when you over-water they will lose their flowers and the leaves will turn yellow and fall off.



What will make my bougainvillea bloom? Sunlight every day. Also, cut back on the water. Fertilize and only water when the plant wilts. Also, if you can find some Hibiscus Food fertilizer use that every 2-3 weeks. Remember, some types of bougainvillea bloom mostly in the fall in response to short days.

When should bougainvillea be pruned? During the growing season you can prune and trim as needed to encourage prolific blooming. Structural pruning of bougainvillea should take place at the end of winter or in early spring, just before the growth season starts but before the plants are actively blooming. (\* How are you supposed to know when it is just before the growth season starts? Ask someone who is in the business of selling bougainvillea, they can give you a rough time estimate.)



Is bougainvillea better in pots or ground?

If you aren't lucky enough to live in a place where it never freezes but you still want to grow bougainvillea, there's good news. Bougainvillea does great in containers. The vine actually blooms more when its roots are slightly crowded, so putting bougainvillea in a pot turns it into a flowering machine.

What temperature kills bougainvillea? Freezing temperatures can cause damage to the outer and upper branches of bougainvillea. Temperatures below 30°F are particularly harmful, and in colder regions, bougainvillea may not survive at all.



How do you winterize bougainvillea in Texas? Lower the temperature. Place your bougainvillea in a cool room. For example, a garage, shed, basement, attic, summerhouse or a cool stairway if you are living in an apartment. You can also place it on a sheltered balcony if you keep control of the temperature (so it doesn't get too cold). Keep it out of any walkways as the branches have sharp thorns.



## TO DO IN THE APRIL GARDEN \*

We do not usually include the whole garden list. We thought we would this month so you can see what is normally edited out. We did remove the natural dyes for Easter eggs, but you can find that before Easter in last year's Yerba

- Please note, most of the information shared here was obtained from Research-based sources (see contributors acknowledgements below), and from individuals who are considered very knowledgeable on a particular subject. While some little tidbits here may be of interest, they should be taken "with-a-grain-of-salt".

*A house though otherwise beautiful, yet if it hath no Garden belonging to it,*

*Is more like a Prison than a House. - William Coles (1656)*

### 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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-

April showers (any rain for that matter) bring nitrogen (more lightning, more nitrogen) and vitamin B-12 to the earth with the rain, that's why plants respond better to rain water than aquifer irrigation. - me

**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.

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  $\frac{1}{8}$  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

**Attracting Hummers & Butterflies:** The following are attractive plants to hummingbirds and butterflies, experts say, and are well-suited to S. Texas landscapes because they are drought-resistant.

A) For Hummingbirds: Autumn sage, Carolina jessamine, ceniza, coral honeysuckle, lantana, red yucca, Turk's cap; also trumpet vine, flame acanthus, columbines, desert willows, coral bean, wild azaleas, brownfoot, ocotillo, and every kind of salvia, penstemon and pentas.

B) Butterflies: are attracted to masses of flat-faced flowers agarita, butterfly bush, Indian blanket, mealy cup sage, purple coneflower, summer phlox and Texas bluebonnet; also sunflowers, rosinweeds, wild ageratum, palmleaf eupatorium, monardas, verbenas, lantana, pavonia, old plainsman, spectacle pod and passionflower. But butterflies also visit tubular and spiky flowers such as salvias, bottlebush, hibiscus, Turk's cap, and Virginia sweetspire. (If you are trying to attract butterflies, please avoid using pesticides that harm caterpillars, such as "Bt", Bacillus thuringiensis, and others. This may sound silly, but some people don't connect the two creatures. - me)

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](http://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 Rosarian 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](http://www.sanantonioherbs.org).

**Room for improvement** - Expert tips on how to avoid costly landscape mistakes!

By: Marsha Murray Harlow and Dr. Douglas F. Welsh (with just a little bit from me!), Neil Sperry's *GARDENS* Mag., Oct. 98.

Top 10 Mistakes Texas Gardeners Make:

1) Over-watering - Over watering or improper watering encourages poor root systems and wastes water, should runoff occur. It also stresses plants, making them more susceptible to disease. Roots in waterlogged soil can't breathe; consequently, plants wilt and turn yellow as their roots rot (foliage on top mimics a thirsty plants). Eventually, they die.

2) Over-fertilizing - Too much of a good thing causes problems for plants as well as for gardeners. Proper fertilizing nurture healthy plants that are able to resist pests and environmental stresses. Too much fertilizer may trigger excessive new top growth, making a plant more susceptible to disease. That abundant new growth also requires more water and more mowing or pruning.

3) Misusing pesticides - A wise gardener knows an insect-free landscape is impossible. The goal is to control the "bad guys" of the insect world and encourage the "good guys". The key is to identify the pest and use an appropriate pesticide. Study your alternatives and only use them as a last resort, as many are nonselective, so the beneficial insects may be affected too. Please keep this in mind, when you kill a beneficial insect, you take over its job!

4) Improperly identifying a plant problem - Before you choose your weapon, you must know who the enemy is. Put your sleuthing skills to work to determine whether the problem is caused by an insect, disease or environmental factor.

5) Using plants that are unproductive and/or poorly adapted to your area - There are reasons that dogwoods and azaleas flourish in East Texas, but not in the Hill Country. Climate, rainfall, soil types and temperatures divide Texas into gardening "zones" and a smart gardener learns to appreciate what grows well in his/hers own backyard.

6) Planting in the wrong place - When placing a plant in your landscape, consider its mature size and its need for sunlight or shade.

7) Failing to prepare soil before planting - No matter what type of soil you have, your success depends on whether you amend the soil. Healthy soil is alive with nutrients and microorganisms and produces healthy plants with few problems. Keep in mind native plants (for your area) do not like too much help, but almost always need good drainage.

8) Failing to use mulch - This layer of organic or inorganic material on the top of the soil can work wonders. It helps soil retain moisture, moderates soil temperature, keeps weed populations down and makes hand-weeding easier. Some plants (including many native plants) could literally drown after a heavy rain if too much mulch is applied.

9) Planting at the wrong time - Timing is important when growing vegetables. Not only must you learn which are warm-weather crops, and which are cool-weather ones (don't plant broccoli in late spring, for example), you also must consider location/region (North Texas gardeners plant tomatoes later than gardeners in South Texas). Permanent landscape plants such as trees, shrubs and groundcovers should be planted in the fall in South Texas.

10) Failing to think long-term - Train yourself to plant with a vision of how your landscape will look in five years, or even ten years. That cute little rosemary plant that smells so good and came in a little 4" pot can grow up to be 5' by 5'.

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

## 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden) (green landscaping)

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

[www.epa.gov/p2week/ingarden.htm](http://www.epa.gov/p2week/ingarden.htm) (pollution prevention in the garden)

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

[www.epa.gov/pesticides/controlling/garden.htm](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/controlling/garden.htm) (controlling pests)

[www.epa.gov/osw/specials/funfacts/may.htm](http://www.epa.gov/osw/specials/funfacts/may.htm) (garden waste)

[www.epa.gov/agriculture/tcop.html](http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/tcop.html) (composting)

[www.epa.gov/owow/nps/toolbox/other/KSMO\\_buildarainbarrel.pdf](http://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

### **3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

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)

**T**urn your compost pile to speed decomposition.

**I**t is time to plant okra, Southern peas and ornamental cotton.

**E**arly 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

#### **4<sup>th</sup> 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.

**I**t 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

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