Hey Gardeners, February is the month of love and roses. With that in mind, we have lots of rose advice for you all. Not only do we have our rose expert, Ed Bull, giving you his pruning advice we also have our other Ed, Ed Rhinehart, who is seeker and finder of every new flower, sharing with us his latest rose discovery. Brooke Moffis and Susan League share with us their advice on how to keep our roses and ourselves healthy as we play in our gardens. This time next year you can pick your own roses for your sweetie on Valentine’s Day!

On other topics, Jim Davis shares with us one of his favorite smaller palms and Joe Mahoney continues his “Turf Wars” with his 2nd great installment. Also, mark your March calendars for The Sumter Co. Horticultural Show March 11-19 and The Master Gardeners Annual Plant Sale scheduled March 26th. Details are on page 5.

So enjoy this month’s Journal and always take time to stop and smell the roses!

---

**The Drift Rose**

By Ed Rhinehart

Every year I look for new ideas for my yard. Most of the time, this is experimental. Sometimes it doesn’t work the way I want. I remember the year I thought that geraniums would highlight my front yard. So I planted maybe fifty or more. They were beautiful until the middle of June’s summer heat and they said good-bye.

A couple of weeks ago, I got an email from a friend who mentioned that they had heard of a new rose on the market, called a “Drift Rose.” Could this be the answer? Well, I did some research and got a feel for their success in our area.

Here’s what I found out. It is a type of rose that is very hardy for our climate and basically maintenance free. It grows only about 20 inches high and spreads out about three feet. There are a lot of choices in color such as red, pink, coral and even variegated, just to name a few. It comes in both single rose and double rose varieties. Doesn’t that sound great! I personally like the double rose. This rose is very drought tolerant and therefore should have well-drained soil.

It is ideal for small sunny garden beds, perennial beds and to brighten up borders. The best part is that it is a continual bloomer! How does that sound? I called my friend Nancy and shared this information with her, and guess what! She went out and bought one!!
Pruning Knockout Roses
Ed Bull

Pruning roses promotes healthy and vigorous plants. It allows you to provide good air circulation, remove unproductive stems and shape your plant.

When to Prune
The best time to do a major pruning of your knockout roses is in the middle of February. Any frost that occurs during this time until spring will not hurt roses. Selective pruning should also be performed all year to remove spent blooms and stems that dieback, break or start turning yellow. By-Pass pruners should always be used to prune your roses. Never use the anvil type pruners, as they will damage the plants by crushing the canes.

How to Prune
You should decide what size and shape you want your bush before starting to do the February pruning. ‘Knock Out’ roses are a shrub rose and can grow to 6 feet tall, but you can keep them as small or large as you like. Once you decide on the size and shape, you should make your cuts about ¼ inch above an outside bud eye. The cut should be on a 45-degree angle facing away from the bud eye. This should be repeated until the bush is the size and shape you like. If a cane that is pruned is over 1/2 inch in diameter, it should be sealed with a good wood glue to prevent disease and insect damage. When finished with the pruning all foliage should be removed and any leaves on the ground should be picked up. Please be sure to clean your pruners before pruning your next bush. Just remember that roses loved to be pruned and it is hard to damage them by pruning. So prune your knockout roses and they will reward you with beautiful blooms in the spring.

Remember: For all other shrubs, wait until March 15th to prune to avoid any late killer frosts that come our way!!

Brooke’s Bug Bytes
By Brooke Moffis

What’s knocking out my ‘Knock Out’ roses?
‘Knock Out’ roses have been planted across the southeastern US because they bloom profusely and are a low maintenance shrub rose. Many Sumter County residents have incorporated the ‘Knock Out’ rose as a major planting in their home landscapes. While this rose is a lovely addition to any Florida garden, it can suffer from an invasive insect pest called Chilli Thrips.

The chilli thrips damage and distort the soft growing tips of the plants that they infect. Your ‘Knock Out’ roses may experience stunting and distortion of their growing tips.
Bug Bytes-cont.
The growing tips and leaves may even exhibit a purple or black appearance when viewed from a distance. If you flip the leaves over, you may even see brown or purple tunnels on the undersides of the leaves. These symptoms are good signs that you have a chilli thrips problem. However, before you reach for that bottle of insecticide, conduct a thorough inspection to be sure that your roses do have these damaging pests.

Chilli Thrips are tiny yellow insects that are about 2 mm in length. You can best detect them by taking a white sheet of paper and gently slapping the growing tips of your roses against the paper. If you have chilli thrips, you will see lots of tiny yellow lines moving quickly on the paper.

Now it is time to treat the pest. The strategy of rotating different types of insecticides must be practiced if a homeowner wants to gain control of chilli thrips. Imidacloprid, acephate, horticultural oils and spinosad are examples of insecticides that can be effective for control. The chemicals listed will be in the fine print on the bottle; they are not the brand names.

The homeowner should treat their ‘Knock Out’ roses with a different active ingredient each time chilli thrips are detected on their roses. If you treat with the same chemical repeatedly for the same pest, then you are wasting your time, money, and insecticide. By knowing how to detect and treat for chilli thrips, you can knock this pest out before they knock out your ‘Knock Out’ roses.

Coontie Palm
Zamia floridana
Syn. Zamia pumila

Jim Davis
Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Extension Agent I

The Florida coontie is probably one of the most reliable plants used in the landscape. Coonties are very low maintenance plants and are very drought tolerant. This Florida native has been used for years and continues to increase in popularity with gardeners. The coontie palm is actually not a palm at all. It belongs to the Cycad family. This plant genus has been around since the dinosaurs, over 200 million years! Coontie palm is related to the sago palm, dioon edule and cardboard palm. The coontie is also the sole larval plant for the very rare Atala Hairstreak (Eumaeus atal florida), found only on South Florida. This small palm is a great replacement plant for the King Sago (Cycas revoluta), which is very susceptible to Asian Cycad Scale (Aulacaspis yasumatsui). This species of scale does not affect the coontie.

USDA Hardiness Zone: 8B-11
Sun: Full Sun, Part shade
Soil: Well drained, not wet
Fertilization: Minimal, if any
Irrigation: Only as needed when established
Pests: Red scale may be a minor problem in some plantings
Companion Plants: Sabal Palm, Yaupon Holly, Dwarf Walters Viburnum, Muhly Grass
Drought Tolerance: High
Height: 1 to 3 Ft.
Growth rate: Slow
February is a good month to begin to plan a strategy for your lawn maintenance. If your lawn had problems during the previous year, these problems will probably return again. Some of the major turf problems are due to fungus infestations.

Fungus spores are always present. They can be found in the soil and in the air. Given the right conditions they can infest your landscape with devastating effect. Turf areas that look normal one week can be brown the next week. Many homeowners come home after a vacation and find that they have Dollar Spot or Brown Patch where there was no sign of any problem before they left.

A healthy lawn will be less likely to get a fungus infestation. Instead of using a high nitrogen fertilizer in the early spring, try using a micronutrient supplement. These supplements are usually labeled as an Iron supplement for plant green-up.

Look for the products that are in liquid form and list Iron, Manganese, Boron, Copper, Magnesium and Zinc on the label. There are some that are in a granular form, but the ones with all these ingredients may be hard to find. Remember that these are micronutrient supplements and do not substitute for your spring fertilization. As a result, the label will show a 0-0-0 because there is no Nitrogen, Phosphorous or Potassium.

Micronutrient supplements are good for the entire landscape. You can use them on turf, palms, shrubs and flowers. A good regimen on their use is one application every two months, with the first application in March and the last application in October.

February is a good time to do a soil analysis for pH. Many fungal diseases tend to start when the soil pH is low or acidic. Others may start when the soil pH is too high or alkaline. You can get information on how to order a pH kit by contacting the Master Gardeners at the Cooperative Extension Office located at the Agriculture Center in Bushnell.

The Master Gardeners hold a plant clinic every Wednesday at the Bushnell Agricultural Center from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. You can contact the Master Gardeners who are on duty by calling (352) 793-2728 to get details on the pH test kits.

HAPPY GARDENING!

Tip on Weeds:
Turf is dormant and brown at this time of year.
Weeds are easy to spot in the sea of brown.
Pull or spot treat now.

Q & A’s

Question: I would like to plant some vegetables, when should I start.

Answer: February is a good time to plant warm season plants. Beans, peppers, cucumber, tomatoes & squash can be planted when temperatures are still cool. You will have to cover your veggies in the event of a hard freeze. A tent of PVC pipe and frost cloth works well and will give you good vegetables this spring.

Question: When is the time to check on my citrus trees?

Answer: Now is the time. If you did not fertilize in Jan., do it now. Frequency and amount of fertilization depends on the age of the tree. See the "Florida Dooryard Citrus Guide" at:
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/hs120
Horticultural Show Update
By Roslyn Davidson

The Sumter County Horticulture Show is held annually in conjunction with the Sumter County Fair. Dates for this year’s Fair are March 11-19.

Anyone who wishes to enter plants for judging can bring in their entries on Wednesday, March 9th, or Thursday, March 10th. Hours for registration are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on both days. Judging will be held on Friday morning. Plants are not judged against each other but on their own merits. A Best of Show will be awarded in each category.

Plants must be clean and free of debris, insects and disease and in clean containers. Do not use dressing. Plants can be pruned and shaped. There is a one plant per pot rule with the only exception being for the collection category. Collections are to have a minimum of three plants with the maximum of five. All plants are to have been in the possession of the exhibitor for at least three months. Children’s entries are 30 days.

Plant pick-up will be on Sunday, March 20th from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. If an exhibitor is unable to pick up their own plants at that time, someone else can pick them up for you.

The Master Gardeners of Sumter County will care for plants on exhibit.

Cindy Dobbs, MG, at last year’s show

Nancy King, MG – A Blue Ribbon Winner!

MG Spring Vendor Plant Sale

Our annual Master Gardeners Vendor sale will be held this year at the Wildwood Community Center on Saturday, March 26, 2001 from 10 am to 4 pm.

Up to 20 local gardening businesses will display and sell their products at this annual outdoor spring event. In addition, an indoor demonstration area will house Master Gardening informational booths on topics such as rain barrels and recycling, Florida Friendly Yards, Native Plant Society, compost display, how to grow roses, native plants and wildflowers, butterflies, children’s garden display, plant propagation, new homeowners and landscaping and a question and answer table for gardening concerns.

Also our Master Gardeners will staff a plant sale table offering residents our own locally grown plants, shrubs and small trees and provide growing guidelines for our customers.
## CALENDAR OF EVENTS – Registration & Info: 352-793-2728

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEBRUARY</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every Mon.</td>
<td>9 am- 3 pm</td>
<td>Plant Clinic*</td>
<td>Sheriff’s Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Wed.</td>
<td>9 am- 3 pm</td>
<td>Plant Clinic*</td>
<td>Bushnell Ext.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Fri.</td>
<td>9 am- 12 pm</td>
<td>Plant Clinic*</td>
<td>Bushnell Ext.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 7</td>
<td>12pm- 2 pm</td>
<td>Florida Gardens Q &amp; A Panel Discussion</td>
<td>Truman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. 10</td>
<td>1 pm- 2 pm</td>
<td>Florida-Friendly Landscaping Class Maintaining Zoysia &amp; St. Augustine Grass</td>
<td>Oxford Comm.Ctr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues. 15</td>
<td>9 am - 11 am</td>
<td>New Residents’ Workshop Registration Required</td>
<td>Colony Cottage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues. 22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Twice on Tuesdays – Ticket Required Free tickets available, Tues, Feb.8 at Savannah or Sea Breeze 9 am to 4 pm, Tues. to Fri. until sold out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 am- 10 am</td>
<td>To Prune Or Not To Prune, That Is The Question?</td>
<td>Savannah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 pm- 2 pm</td>
<td>To Prune Or Not To Prune, That Is The Question?</td>
<td>Sea Breeze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 25</td>
<td>9 am- 12 pm</td>
<td>Demo Garden Teaching Work Day Pruning &amp; Transplanting Roses</td>
<td>Bushnell Ext.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* You can send questions to mailto:plantclinic@aol.com. Attach any pictures to your e-mail.

## ADDRESSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bushnell Extension Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7620 SR 471, Bushnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1545 Buena Vista Blvd, The Villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumter County Fairgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7620 SR 471, Bushnell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savannah Recreation Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>510 Colony Blvd, The Villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Breeze Recreation Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2384 Buena Vista Blvd, The Villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truman Recreation Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2705 Canal St., The Villages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colony Cottage Recreation Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4027 CR 106, Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherriff’s Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:SumterCoMGJournal@gmail.com">SumterCoMGJournal@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Produced and Edited by Dani Camp, Nancy King, Roslyn Davidson and Brooke Moffis.