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### **Gardening Tips: Borders**

If you want to add ground cover such as creeping thyme or alyssum to your garden here is a great way to get started early and a fabulous way to create instant borders without the backache of having to plant each flower. Measure the area you want covered with ground cover. Let's say you want to create a border along an existing garden that is 10 feet long. Cut newspaper (about 2 pages thick) into two feet long by one foot wide strips. To cover 10 feet you will need five of these two foot strips. Place the strips in a slightly sunny area but where the seeds won't be disturbed or pelted with rays of light, such as basement shelving near a window. Place garbage bags on the shelves then add the newspaper strips. Do not overlap strips.

Sprinkle the seeds on the newspaper like you would if you were planting them in the ground. Place a layer of paper towel over each strip and then spray the towel, seeds and newspaper with a water bottle. You want to saturate the towel and the newspaper, but you don't want it to drip. The paper must never dry out (if it does spray immediately.) Remove the paper towel when the seeds germinate (in about a week.) Two months later, weather permitting, you can plant your newspaper strips, now bursting with seedlings, outdoors. First carefully arrange each seedling strip where it will be planted. Once you are happy with the arrangement cover bare newspaper areas with soil to anchor the strip.

## General Gardening Tips

Save all flats and flower pots that come with your plants. First, you can always use these to start your seeds next season (be sure to wash the flats to rid them of any disease.) Second, it may look funny at first, but if you cut out the bottom of plastic pots and place them over younger transplants it will protect them from rabbits. Additionally, placing pots around ornamental grasses is a great way to contain the younger, lower grass strands from rotting as they lay on the ground. The band created by the pot will keep the strands off the ground.

Here's a coffee tip. Humans are not the only ones to get a boost from espresso. Plants do too! Caffeine and theophylline, two ingredients of coffee are popular ingredients in expensive skin care products, and key ingredients in asthma medications, but also make excellent fertilizer for plants. You can get it by the big bagful and for free just by contacting your local coffee shop. Just mix the espresso in with your existing soil every few months and watch your plants grow. Successful gardening means that you don't always have to buy everything new, such as pots or fertilizer. Look around your home to see what you already have that you can reuse.

## Late Autumn Gardening Tips

Come fall gardeners are usually a little teary-eyed over parting ways with garden tasks. For a little late season planting run to the nearest garden section and buy California poppy, candytuft, cornflower, dianthus, phlox, cosmos, soapwort, spinach, larkspur, pansies, some marigolds, snapdragons, garlic, and/or sweet pea seeds for what should be half off at that time of year. These hardy annuals can actually be planted in the fall and will bloom in the spring or summer!

Who doesn't want instant blooming results in the garden? If you buy a plant you want it to be all it can be like, yesterday, right. Nurseries know this and so you will pay a premium for larger plants. Not only is there a demand, but also the overhead on a mature plant is more than a new one (larger container, more water, etc.) But if you are patient, buy the smaller plant. It will save you a good deal of money and in a couple of months, with the right conditions and some Miracle grow your plant formerly known as small, will be a force to be reckoned with.

Autumn is a great time of year to buy your seeds on sale as well as plant those late year garden varieties in your garden. Take the time to plan an autumn garden so you can enjoy flowers late into the year.

## **Gardening Tips: Using The Internet**

The Internet is a gardener's best friend. You might be surprised to know that your local nursery has been charging you way too much money. Or you might be pleasantly surprised to discover your local nursery is the best kept secret with great prices and stock. The point is, shop around online as well as offline. Here is one reason why: while searching for farmers or companies that sold plants in her area, one gardener we interviewed came across a nursery she had never heard of. She called and discovered they sold directly to nurseries until June when they opened to the public, but since she was local she could look through their 12 greenhouses and buy what she wanted. She had her pick of flowers, colors, textures, and rarities and didn't have to worry about the item she wanted being sold out. Not only can you find great deals by researching, but you can also find new sources!

As well, the Internet is a great place to get ideas for next year's garden. You'll find many ideas no matter what type of garden you're growing. Check out gardening forums to see what other gardeners around the country are doing. You might find a great new garden idea that is sure to transform your garden into a neighborhood show piece.

## Gardening Tips: More Advice

Stones between the sizes of oranges and cantaloupes make great decorations, or borders for gardens, but if you want a lot they can be costly. If you live near new construction, be it a large building or a new neighborhood, you are sure to find many suitable rocks for your garden. Be careful, as construction sites can be dangerous. Don't forget to bring a wagon with so you can easily roam the area and move your stones at the same time.

Here's a tip about plants and seeds. Whether the plant is an annual, perennial, or bush such as the azalea you should harvest the seeds even if you don't plan on planting them. Why? Because you can trade them for other seeds, grow the plants and sell them at the end of your driveway or at the farmer's market for extra money. You can even donate the seeds to local charities, or animal shelters, that can then resell them at a fundraiser.

Gardening is all about finding out what works best for you and what doesn't. Take the time to write down all of your gardening ideas so that you can read them over during the winter months in preparation for the spring months. Then when spring arrives you'll be ready to buy the seeds and plants you want for your new garden plan.

## Admiring The Old Garden Rose

To recreate the gardens of your ancestors, include the old garden roses. These date back for centuries, are hardier, and include a large variety. They fare well in poor conditions, are the easiest type of rose to care for, do best in rich soil that drains well, and continue to bloom for years.

Some types of the old garden rose are Mary Queen of Scots, Sweetheart Rose, American Beauty, Awakening, and Belle Amore.

The Butterfly Rose is an ancient hybrid from China, introduced in 1932. The blooms change colors from soft orange to pink to carmine, which makes it a delight to observe.

Old garden roses with the traditional appearance include:

The Duchesse de Brabant (a Gulf Coast rose with a light scent),  
Belinda's Dream (long stems, nice fragrance),  
Zepherine Drouhin (unique fragrance),  
Red Radiance (strong fragrance).

What classifies a rose as an old garden rose? According to the American Rose Society, these are plants introduced before 1867. They prefer light fertilization, a light feeding schedule, and patience. They bloom only when they are ready to bloom.

Judging seminars are held because it is a challenge to judge the old garden rose; therefore, the judging for it is not set in stone. Fewer judges are familiar with it than with the newer modern roses.

If your goal is to show your old garden roses for prizes, you'll have to pay a bit more attention to them and prepare them properly for the shows. Things to look for include strong, vibrant blooms, leaves, and stems. They should have good color. Remove damaged petals (trim if

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necessary). The foliage should be clean. The less side growths you have on your canes, the better. A stem-on-stem condition is considered impairment. This is when new growth starts where old growth had stopped.

A national show was held in Dallas, Texas, in October of 2006. There are district shows and local shows around the country as well. If you are interested in competing in the rose shows, you might consider joining the American Rose Society. Through such a group, you can obtain a wealth of information and contacts.

Plenty of garden groups and clubs exist for rose enthusiasts. A short list of some of these clubs are as follows: American Horticultural Society, Arlington Rose Foundation, Phoenix Rose Society, Potomac Rose Society, Arizona West Valley Rose Society, and Humboldt Rose Society.

If you would enjoy traveling around the United States in search of gardens to view the various old garden roses, among other types, you could try the following places:

The Pageant of Roses Garden, Whittier, CA, Washington Park International Rose Test Garden, Portland, OR, Inez Parker Memorial Rose Garden, San Diego, CA, The Gardens of the American Rose Society, Shreveport, LA, Tyler Municipal Rose Garden Center, Tyler, TX, and the Zilker Botanical Garden, Austin, TX.

If traveling the United States is not an option, try the local yellow pages in your area or call or visit the Chamber of Commerce in your town to get information on local gardens, clubs, and events that feature old garden roses.

## All About Roses

Who hasn't heard of the most popular flowering plant of all time, the rose? The rose plant can spark a quick conversation amongst even the shyest of persons. Almost anyone can tell you of someone they know who has grown beautiful roses or of someone who couldn't. Almost anyone can tell you of someone who got or sent roses, especially around the holidays. Even little children know what the rose plant is.

The local florist most likely has dozens of colors, types, and sizes of rose plants. It would seem to be the best selling flower of all time. The local discount store and even the local grocer carries some sort of rose plant these days.

In my opinion, the best rose is one that has a strong scent. A rose has a most distinct smell, and a scent welcome to most anyone. The fragrance is like no other and has been reproduced in perfumes and air fresheners for years. There are rose-scented oils and lotions, bath products. There are rose colors and rose images galore. You can find rose parades and people named Rose. You can even come out "smelling like a rose". All because of a mere plant that reached enormous proportions of popularity.

The rose plant is available in a wide variety of colors, sizes, and types. It is known worldwide. The prices vary depending on where you buy or what type and size you want.

Do you want a rose plant already started in a pot? You may have to repot it. Make sure you do your homework before you buy one.

When you decide what type of rose plant you'd like, think of placement. There is a plant called the thornless rose plant that will grow in the shade. But most rose plants are known to have thorns, so you wouldn't want your small child or grandchild or frequent tiny visitors to happen upon something that is so pretty that they can't resist grabbing and end up with an unwelcome handful of thorns. It may even sour them on the enjoyment of the rose plant for life because of a tearful memory. And roses are too beautiful to allow such a thing!

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There are climbing rose plants which you most certainly wouldn't want trailing across the ground to be stomped by animals or other foot traffic. Some roses are delicate and unfiltered light would cook their leaves to an unwelcome brown. If your rose plant is the type that grows into a bush, you would want to place it in a spot that allows for it to spread.

Rose plants carry so many different names, it's probably enough to fill a small book! Some of the names include Rose Blaze, Rose Red Eden, Rose New Dawn, Rose Neptune, Rose Zephyrine, just to name a very few. If you want a rose that sounds like it belongs in a class all its own, you could buy a Rose Paris D'Yves St. Laurent! That's a mouthful! Happy Hunting!

## Arranging Flowers For Dummies

Have you been intimidated by the thought of putting together a flower arrangement but experienced failure before you even bought the flowers? Arranging flowers is not that difficult with a little guidance and some great ideas! Displaying your flowers can be fun especially when being creative in stylish but simple ways.

The first thing to start with is finding some basic household containers for your fresh cut flowers. Don't be limited to the typical glass vase but expand the horizons of your creativity and just start to look around you. Grandma's old water picture makes a great country look or a sterling silver pitcher for a more traditional look. Simple candle votive holders with a single flower in it at each place setting at your dinner party, adds a touch of elegance. Old cans and bottles can be quite nostalgic. The ideas are endless without the expense of purchasing a vase. Choosing flowers with large heads like lilies, orchids or sunflowers individually put in a container all lined up is quite stylish.

Using vintage teapots, tumblers or even old jam jars can create a conversation piece. Be sure to cut the stems short so the flowerheads skim the top of the container. Jar or glass containers can be put inside baskets for a unique fall look or spring assortment.

If you have a suitable vase but the color is just not right, try wrapping it with ribbon, string or a scarf. This adds a nice visual interest and distracts the eye from the vase. You could even stick the vase inside a decorative gift bag for that goes with your theme or decor.

It is much easier to coordinate the color of flowers once you have the vase design set. Another great idea, yet simple, is to cover the outside of the vase in double-sided adhesive tape. Then stick large leaves vertically around. Some household leaves look wonderful because of their exotic markings, coloration or glossiness. If you have no leaves, wind plain string or colored in coils around the bottles or jars. Adding beads or shells can add an ethnic look. Satin parcel ribbon or even honeysuckle vines will work. Go with where your interests lie.

If this is all not simple enough for you or you have had a few disasters in your demonstration, then a lovely way of displaying flowers is to cut off individual flower heads and float them in a

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low dish of water. Adding small floating candles is very romantic and brings a peace and tranquility into your arrangement and your home.

Flower arranging is not something you can really fail at if the flowers you love are mixed with the people you love. Whether the arrangement is for your home or elsewhere, enjoy your creation and the time you spent creating it. Stop and smell the flowers is a cliché we have all heard but oh so true! In this fast paced world, take time to enjoy the scents, beauty and diversity of flowers.

## Designing Your Rose Garden

The use of landscape roses can make the exterior of any house more graceful, fragrant and inviting. Selecting the right varieties to compliment and accent the home's style and your vision, will contribute to the success of your landscape and rose garden design.

Finding the perfect roses for your rose garden is not hard at all because of the the diverse varieties roses come in. The problem lies in choosing the right ones for your landscape needs and the design you wish to attain.

Roses come in a number of classes. Each class holds characteristics that make them a great choice for use as landscape ornamentals. If you'd like to have roses growing up and over a trellis or archway or cascading from window boxes, the tall growing tea roses are a perfect choice. Tea roses are known for their wild growing blooms and all who walk under the archway enjoy a beautiful display of roses.

If a trellis is not available and you're looking to accent a wall, then choose a true climbing rose. The beauty of a true climbing rose allows you train the plant into many different looks and effects. In essence you can train it any way you want it to grow.

The Floribunda rose is an excellent choice when a vibrant splash of background color is what you're looking for. The popular Floribunda rose varieties give all this color in the landscape with their large and breathtaking sprays of blooms.

The versatile rose can also be used as a ground cover or planted in front of other plants to give color and accent. They can also be used as stand alone specimens and trained into a small tree or planted as hedges. Rugosa roses are a good choice for this. The goal or impact of the rose is not the varieties or ways it can be grown but the colors they offer in the living gardening palette. What gardeners want are healthy rose plants that deliver impact in many sizes, styles, textures, colors and shapes. When considering your design for your rose garden choose the complimentary colors for your surrounding landscape. A simple arrangement of pink roses delivers the perfect compliment to a stone or marble entranceway or drive. White tea roses offer a striking contrast against a dark red brick home. Roses come in so many colors it should

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be easy to find colors which compliment and enhance any decorating or landscape design you come up with. Designing your rose garden will be exciting and challenging to say the least. Incorporate your own color favorites and mix styles and textures for an interesting appeal.

Roses do well in a variety of temperature zones and climates so make sure you choose the varieties suitable to the area in which you live. This translates into fewer maintenance issues, less pesticides and disease issues promoting overall a healthier rose garden.

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