

Thursday, July 12, 2001

Rose Encounters

Even walkers, joggers stop and smell them



It's rosey: David Paul's home in Canton is dressed up nicely with roses throughout the yard. The blooms particularly accent an arbor and nearby trellis.

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
SPECIAL WRITER

David Paul knew he had something special when joggers, who usually won't slow down for anything less than freight trains, actually stopped to smell his roses in the yard of his Canton home.

"I get a lot of people who will walk through my yard and I don't know them," said Paul.

He doesn't get upset by these strangers taking a stroll on his property. In fact, he understands clearly that the stunning show of "60 or so" rose bushes are enough to lure even those normally shy admirers.

"I kind of lost count," Paul said of his large variety of mostly old garden roses.

Budding interest

Paul's hobby began six years ago when he bought his first rose bush, an America climber he planted in the corner of his front lot.

Today, he has rose beds everywhere in bursts of pink, deep red, salmon, purple, yellow, white and orange circling and drifting into the backyard and as a hedge along the driveway.

"I'd probably have 100 rose bushes if I could, but my kids want room to play in. They keep complaining that I'm taking all their grass."

Actually, Paul is inching toward that 100 mark if you count his volunteer work helping to landscape the front entrances of his subdivision, Covington Square. Almost 30 red and white bushes decorate these spots.

In fact, Paul's hobby has become a family affair with his four sons, ranging in age from 7 to 16, sometimes moving soil and planting. His wife, Debbie, also helps with watering and using the fruits of their labor to decorate the inside of their house.

"I do bring in a lot of cut flowers," Debbie said. Husband David prefers these more hardy old garden roses to the modern hybrid tea, identified by the one flower on the end of each stem. However, they tend to be prone to black spot and other fungal diseases.

"I don't like to spray in my backyard and the old roses don't really require that," said Paul, whose love for things that grow took root when he was a boy and cared for plants in his room. While he appreciates the beauty of any rose



STAFF PHOTOS BY PAUL HENNINGMAN

Paint a picture: David Paul's yard is painted with so many attractive colors in his roses, that even passers-by stop to look at and smell them

bush, Paul said, if he were pressed to pick just one, it would be the Rugosa.

An electrical engineer, Paul often wakes up early and tends to the roses before he goes to work. He considers raising roses an escape from his office job, but he can't help but take an analytical approach.

"I like to plan it out and research before I buy it," he said. "The neighbors tell us that they love it or they come over and ask for advice."

One of his best sources for information, he said, is online at www.gardenweb.com in the rose gallery.

"It's a good place if you're just starting to grow roses, because a lot of people don't know where to start," he added.

Brewing tea

One of the tips he learned online was an organic means of feeding. So, three times annually he takes a large garbage can and fills it with water, adds alpha meal, cottonseed meal and fish emulsion. Paul mixes it up, closes the lid and lets it sit for a week in the sun allowing it to ferment.

"I call it a rose tea, because you take your (watering) can and dip it in there and water your roses," he said adding that the mixture is full of the nutrients his roses need.

Paul also has his own Web page at www.rosegeek.com. The name, he said, pokes fun at the people who tease him about being an engineer geek.

Paul, a transplant from Toronto, said one of the most important things to remember is to plant roses that will thrive in the suburban Detroit gardening zone.

"Make sure you buy winter hardy," he added. "The climate here for



Colorful: David Paul stands near some rose bushes in his yard.

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Want to grow some roses? Here's a few pointers

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
SPECIAL WRITER

More and more roses have elevated in status from their usual rooting grounds in the backyard to the front where passersby can appreciate their glorious blooms and fragrances.

"I see people incorporating them into their landscaping rather than relegating them into stand-alone rose beds," said Nancy Lindley, who owns Great Lakes Roses in Belleville with her husband, Roger.

And people are putting them into their perennial gardens.

Roses generally need at least six or seven hours daily of direct sunlight.

"Any area that turf grass does well so do roses," Lindley said. "You can pull out that lawn and put



in roses."

Most also require more water than what usual rainfalls provide in Michigan. So rose gardeners need to remember to water during dry spells.

Aside from sun and water, fertilizer is the next most important element for healthy rose bushes.

Many rose varieties are heavy feeders requiring monthly fertilizer from early May to the first of August or they can be fed once a year with a chemical called Osmocote.

Most landscape roses don't need a lot of care, yet they provide tremendous rays of constant color to garden beds.

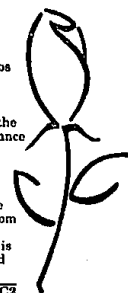
"There's a broader availability of some landscape roses," Lindley said.

"They have thick plants and attractive shrubs when they're not in bloom. There's a bonus of bloom all throughout the growing season from early June through frost."

Among the shrub roses, Meidiland is one of the most popular varieties. It was developed in France as a colorful landscape rose and grows wider than it does tall.

Towne & Country shrub roses originated in Denmark and are known to be winter hardy with a lot of repeat bloom. They bloom in huge clusters of small flowers with constant color from June through frost.

A third popular rose shrub is Rugosa, which is native to the cold weather regions of Korea and



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MARTY FIGLEY

Flavors over flames

Spice up the flavors of backyard barbecues by using herbs, spices and flavored vinegars.

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JOE GAGNON

Bolled over:

The Appliance Doctor thinks consumers should play it safe and avoid heating water in microwave ovens.

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HOMETOWN LIFE

Missing link:

A gravestone missing from a local cemetery turns up in a backyard of a historic home. See Hometown Life, page C7.

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