

Timely Tips on GARDENING

By Betty Frankel



ROSE TESTING

Several gardeners in the Farmington area are enjoying the adventure of growing and testing new roses for one of the large commercial rose growers, Jackson and Perkins Company, and there are other gardeners who are testing plants for the American Rose Society. In these gardens may be seen lush roses with beautiful blooms and attractive foliage, but on the label wired to each plant is a number rather than a name. Until these plants have proved themselves they remain nameless.

It takes about seven years to develop a new rose. Parents with desirable characteristics are selected and numerous crosses are made by carefully crushing pollen from one plant and applying it to the other plant. The brush used resembles an artist's watercolor brush. The seeds that develop are grown in flats and the following year are planted long rows in the test fields.

FOR TWO YEARS the plants are grown and tested and the obviously undesirable ones are eliminated. Out of every ten thousand seedlings started, generally only three or four make the grade for further testing and observational selection. Jackson and Perkins has one hundred test stations throughout the country and also to numerous gardeners in various parts of the country so they can be tested under normal home garden conditions. They are tested for three years and

those selected for selling to the public are then "mass produced" by cutting and grafting.

The local gardeners who are participating in the test each get four different hybrid tea roses to grow. They are given a brief description of the rose and the plant to which it belongs, so that the information may influence their judgment. Detailed suggestions for planting and caring for the roses are given, but they are merely what is considered good practice by any successful grower of roses. These include a regular program of insect, mite and fungal control.

The Reverend Richard Markham officiated at the double-ring, candlelight ceremony. For her wedding, the bride wore a gown of white silk organza with a brocade bodice and a lace hem. She wore a lace fingertip veil and carried a bouquet of stephanotis and white roses.

AS SOON AS growth starts in the Spring records are kept on a scoring sheet. Twelve characteristics are judged, each being scored on a scale of one to ten.

The shape of the bush and the uprightness and balance of the canes and branches is checked, as is the quantity and continuity of bloom. Vigor and hardiness, and disease resistance are noted. The strength of the fragrance and the quality of the foliage are judged. Bud form, flower form, petal texture, and color in full bloom are noted. Last but not least fragrance is judged.

The test gardeners mail in their reports early in the Fall with any pertinent comments that they care to make. They also have the privilege of suggesting names for the new roses. It's a great thrill when one of their roses becomes an award winner.

REMINDERS

Roses have bloomed profusely and many are now in a resting and vegetative growth phase. New shoots, leaves and buds are developing. To encourage another bush of buds, fertilizing the plants now and again at the end of July.

Don't fertilize late in summer or tender growth will be produced that will winterkill. Keep roses watered and mulch to conserve soil moisture. Do not prune or cut any leaves off shrub roses, climbers but merely remove faded blossoms. New buds form at the top of the branches. If lawns look pale they may need another feeding.

If lawns are not watered, they turn brown and not properly watered, damage. A light sprinkling causes shallow roots and encourages damage.

1. July 14, Ford Assembly Plant and Mill.

2. July 21, Belle Isle and Detroit News.

3. July 28, Children's Museum and Radio Station WXYZ.

4. August 4, Detroit Zoo.

5. August 11, For Wayne Museum and Veterinarians.

6. August 18, Mystery Trip. For further information on any or all of the trips, call the YMCA at 474-3322.

7. YMCA Wednesday Trip Programs is for boys and girls 8 through 12 who are YMCA Members and their guests.

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