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TWO NEW ROSES MAKE ALL-AMERICA SELECTION LIST

‘Walking on Sunshine’ is a 2011 AARS (All-America Rose Selection) winner from Jackson and Perkins. This rose should be an easy success for those new to roses because of its fantastic bloom production, plant vigor and good disease resistance. It produces clusters of bright yellow anise scented flowers which finish light yellow in color. The gradual fade in color adds another layer of interest to this neat, rounded, easy care rose.

‘Dick Clark’ is the other 2011 AARS winner. No two flowers are exactly alike on this changeable chameleon of a rose. Black-red buds spiral open to show off swirls of cream edged and washed with vibrant cherry pink. But that’s not the end of the exhibit on these classically-formed fragrant flowers. When the sun strikes the petals, they begin to blush burgundy, finishing as a deep dark red. Put all this color against super-shiny green foliage with nice long cutting stems and you’ve got a killer combo. In addition to all this beauty, ‘Dick Clark’ is easy to grow and with great vigor—a beautiful bushy baby from the famous ‘Fouth of July’. For more information about either of the selections and to see a color photo of the roses, go to www.rose.org.


ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY GARDENING WORKSHOP TO BE HELD IN MEMPHIS & MACON

An “Environmentally Friendly Gardening” workshop will be held Monday, February 21 from 10:00-3:00 at the Fitness Center in Memphis. The cost is $3 to cover the cost of the meeting room. Lunch is on your own or bring your lunch. Pre-registration is required by February 18. The workshop is also being offered in Macon at the Apple Basket Restaurant, 215 N. Rollins. Lunch will be available at the restaurant. There is a cost of $2 to cover materials. Registration deadline for the Macon workshop is March 16. To register call the Adair County Extension Center at 660-665-9866 or email schutterjl@missouri.edu. The bad weather date for Memphis is March 21, and March 25 for Macon. You must pre-register to get handouts and to be informed of a weather cancellation (or if I have a sick child). When you register please give us your phone number. A rain barrel will be given away to one lucky person. Class topics are: historical look at water quality in America, making and using rain barrels, companion planting, making and using compost, and identifying and controlling common garden pests without the use of synthetic chemicals.
Worldwide people are rediscovering the benefits of buying local food. It is fresher than anything in the grocery store and that means it tastes better and is more nutritious. Buying directly from family farmers helps them stay in business and is good for the local economy. Depending on where you live, eating locally produced food may not be that hard. Practically speaking, local food production can be thought of in concentric circles that start with growing food at home. The next ring out might be food grown in our immediate community, then state, region, and country. For some parts of the year or for some products that thrive in the local climate, it may be possible to buy closer to home. At other times, or for less common products, an expanded reach may be required.

I have found that I can eat locally grown foods year round. Not every meal I make is 100% locally produced, but just about 75% of each meal I make is from local products, particularly the evening meal. You might say, how do I do it, living in Kirksville, MO? Well, we have a local pork producer, egg producer, beef producers, milk producer and fruit and vegetable producers all within a 60 mile radius of Kirksville, and this is probably true for most of you living here in Missouri, or Iowa, Illinois and Indiana, where most of my Garden Talk readers live.

I like to cook, so I try to incorporate as much healthy, local products as I can into each meal. This morning, I made scrambled eggs, using eggs from a local producer. I added green pepper from my own garden that I had frozen, and mushrooms and ham that were U.S. grown and raised. If I cannot get something local, like mushrooms, I at least try to get U.S. grown foods. I like to buy mushrooms from J-M Farms Inc., a mushroom producer out of Miami, Oklahoma, just 20 miles over the Missouri border. I don’t buy much in the way of food from Wal-Mart, but here in Kirksville, that is the only place I can find J-M Farms, Inc. mushrooms. I no longer buy local milk since Heartland Dairy stopped bottling it. We go through at least two gallons or more a week, and it just costs too much to buy from our local dairy when I need so much. I totally promote buying this local milk, and I would if I didn’t go through so much in a week.

I get beef from my parents from a steer they have raised. I prefer grain-fed beef over pasture-fed. Everyone has their own likes and dislikes, and even though the movement is to eat pasture-fed beef, my husband and I prefer grain-fed. The few steers my dad keeps each year are for the most part, pasture fed, but he does give them a little grain (antibiotic-free) because our family really likes grain fed beef. The meat from these steers is lean and has good flavor. My husband bought a pasture-fed lamb a couple of years ago from a senior capstone class that had been raising them as a project at the Truman State University farm. It was okay, but we would have preferred a grain-fed lamb. Again, it’s all about what you like. We also like pork, and have found a local pork producer raising Hereford hogs (a heritage breed). The meat is lean and has a good “pork” flavor.

I raise a lot of vegetables in my home garden and the extension garden. We are still eating potatoes, onions, and a variety of fruits and vegetables that I froze last summer. If we want corn, broccoli, green beans, bell pepper, pumpkin, persimmon, strawberries, blueberries, wild blackberries, gooseberries, shredded zucchini, and rhubarb, I just have to walk out to the freezer in the garage. I kept two large onions in our laundry room which is warm and dry, not the ideal place to store onions because onions sprout under these conditions, but they have provided my constant supply of green onion this winter, which is great to put into soups, scrambled eggs and potatoes. When we moved into our current house almost four years ago, I decided to plant some fruits, so in the backyard I planted two gooseberry bushes, and blackberry and raspberry plants. Two blueberry bushes and rhubarb plants were already there when we moved in. Speaking of blueberries, just six miles east of Kirksville is Lost Branch Blueberry Farm, the only u-pick blueberry farm in the area. If you are in northeast Missouri, and have not visited them, I encourage you to do so this summer.

I also made apple sauce, peach preserves, salsa and pickles all while having a new baby and three year old. I actually had to take time off from work to preserve the fruits and vegetables, but the kids were right there out in the garden harvesting
them with me. The apples I got from a friend’s apple tree here in Adair county, and the peaches I bought were from Illinois. Sam, a Master Gardener here in Kirksville, gave me a lot fresh pears that came from his farm in Knox County. They were wonderful and I took his wife’s advice and froze some. They are very good, if you let them unthaw just a little and then eat them. I have another Master Gardener friend that I have learned a lot from in the past couple of years. Her name is Glinda, and she gave me some dry, heirloom bean seeds last spring to plant, so I did, and now have jars of dry edible beans. Glinda and her daughter also explained to me how to can peach preserves and apple sauce, something I had never tried before. My grandma who lives in south Missouri has gardened nearly all her life, and taught me several years ago how to can pickles. She has a wonderful dill pickle recipe that my mom and I like to use. How many of you have dehydrated cantaloupe? A couple of years ago a babysitter my son had, dehydrated some, and they were very good, so I tried some too. I also like to dehydrate tomatoes and blueberries, and there are many other fruits and vegetables that you can dehydrate well.

Okay, let’s talk U.S. and foreign grown products now. My husband loves asparagus, and this time of year it is expensive, so I don’t buy it fresh, and I certainly don’t buy it in a can. I try not to buy any fruit or vegetables in a can. If it isn’t something I or a local producer have grown, then I try to buy only frozen, U.S. grown produce. Well, because my husband was persistent on me buying asparagus, I went to Aldi and found some frozen asparagus for $1.99. I usually always check labels to see the country of origin, but for some reason that day I didn’t, and when I got home I saw that it was a product of Peru, a country that is a large producer of asparagus. Now, my husband could care less where it comes from, but for me, it was a mistake I had made in my quest to eat only local or U.S. produced food, and I didn’t just have one bag, I had bought him several bags of it. When I was on a horticulture trip to Costa Rica in 2005 I learned that pesticide regulations are not near as strict in the Central and South American countries as they are in the United States. “Central America uses more pesticides on a per capita basis, one and a half kilograms of pesticides per person per year, more than any other region in the world, according to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Imports of pesticides rose from 20 million kilograms per year in 1992 to nearly 50 million kilograms in 1998, an all-time high. And notably, some of the pesticides used in Central America have been judged dangerous enough to be banned in the United States and Europe. As a result, as many as 5 million agricultural workers in Central America, many of whom are children, are at risk of exposure to pesticides, according to UN figures”. Source: Population Reference Bureau http://www.prb.org/Articles/2001/PesticidesAThreattoCentralAmericasChildrenandtheRegionsFuture.aspx. At the Missouri Farm to School workshop held in Kirksville on January 21, it was noted that in a research study conducted, more DDT was found in the umbilical cords of infants now than 30 years ago. Now, that is scary. Do I want to eat asparagus from anywhere but my own garden or maybe the United States, not really, but since I had several bags of it, I have been washing it in hot water first, then steaming it.

“In the seven countries of the Central American Isthmus (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama), there has been a constant increase in the use of pesticides. In recent years, it reached an annual average of 45 million kilograms of active ingredients, imported and formulated in 42 plants located in these countries. Unfortunately, this increase was accompanied by inappropriate use of the products, deficient storage and production conditions, a lack of understanding of the real health effects due to unspecified symptomatology, and a lack of research on the long term effects of these products on health and environmental deterioration. According to the countries’ registration, 7,000 annual cases of APP are reported every year in this Subregion. However, underreporting is still considerable due to difficulties of farm workers access to health services, erroneous diagnoses, and problems in registration and reporting”. Source: World Health Organization, http://www.paho.org/english/sha/be_v23n3-plaguicidas.htm.

Part two of this story will appear in the March issue of Garden Talk. In it I will discuss tropical fruits, more local meat options and food miles.

Other Sources: http://www.localharvest.org/


GARDENING TIPS FOR FEBRUARY

Ornamentals
- Water evergreens if the soil is dry and unfrozen.
- Inspect summer bulbs in storage to be sure none are drying out. Discard any that show signs of rot.
- Winter aconite (Eranthis sp.) and snowdrops (Galanthus sp.) are hardy bulbs frequently push up through snow to bloom now.
- Take geranium cuttings now. Keep the foliage dry to avoid leaf and stem diseases.
- Sow seeds of larkspur, sweet peas, Shirley poppies and snapdragons where they are to grow outdoors.
- Seeds of slow-growing annuals like ageratum, verbena, petunias, geraniums, coleus, impatiens and salvia may be started indoors.
- Start tuberous begonias indoors. "Non-stop" varieties perform well in this climate.
- Dormant sprays can be applied to ornamental trees and shrubs now. Do this on a mild day while temperatures are above freezing.

Fruit
- Inspect fruit trees for tent caterpillar egg masses. Eggs appear as dark brown or gray collars that encircle small twigs. Destroy by pruning or scrubbing off with your thumbnail.
- Collect scion wood now for grafting of fruit trees later in spring. Wrap bundled scions with plastic and store them in the refrigerator.
- When pruning diseased branches, sterilize tools with a one part bleach, nine parts water solution in between cuts. Dry your tools at day's end and rub them lightly with oil to prevent rusting.
- Begin pruning fruit trees. Start with apples and pears first. Peaches and nectarines should be pruned just before they bloom.
- Grapes and bramble fruits may be pruned now.
- Established fruit trees can be fertilized once frost leaves the ground. Use about one-half pound of 12-12-12 per tree, per year of age, up to a maximum of 10 pounds fertilizer per tree. Broadcast fertilizers over the root zone staying at least one foot from the tree trunk.

Vegetables
- Start onion seeds, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and cabbage indoors now for transplanting into the garden later this spring.
- Season extending devices such as cold frames, hot beds, cloches and floating row covers allow for an early start to the growing season.
- If soil conditions allow, take a chance sowing peas, lettuce, spinach and radish.

Miscellaneous
- When sowing seeds indoors, use sterile soil mediums to prevent diseases. When seeds sprout, provide ample light to encourage stocky growth.
- Repot root-bound house plants before vigorous growth occurs. Choose a new container that is only 1 or 2 inches larger than the old pot.
- Branches of pussy willow, quince, crabapple, forsythia, pear and flowering cherry may be forced indoors.
- Maple sugaring time is here! Freezing nights and mild days make the sap flow.

-Missouri Botanical Garden-

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 1: Salt River Master Gardener meeting, 7:00 pm, Palmyra Sesquicentennial Bldg.
February 4: Greenhouse Grower’s School, Bradford Research and Extension Center, 4968 Rangeline Road, Columbia, From 63 travel east on Rt. WW to Rangeline and turn right) Registration is $15 per person (includes lunch) payable at the door.
February: Fabius Master Gardener club meeting, no info at this time.
February: Heartland Master Gardeners, no info at this time.
February 8: Sullivan County Master Gardener meeting, 6 pm, REC Building, Milan.
February: Magic City Master Gardener meeting, no info available at this time.
February 15: Kirksville Area Master Gardener meeting, 7:00 pm, Kirksville TCRC.
February 28: Macon-Shelby Master Gardener meeting, 6:30 pm, extension office.
March 3: Vegetable Gardening Workshop; 10:00-3:00, Park Baptist Church in Brookfield; topics covered include growing and eating local produce, composting, raised beds, soil amending, controlling pests naturally, and food safety. No cost to attend. You must pre-register by March 1 by calling 660-665-9866 or schutterjl@missouri.edu

Garden Talk!

Jennifer Schutter, University of Missouri Extension Horticulture Specialist
503 E. Northtown Road, Kirksville, MO 63501-1999
schutterjl@missouri.edu 660-665-9866