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February 3: Greenhouse Growers' School, Days Inn Conference Center, 1900 I-70 Drive SW, Columbia, MO. Contact: David Trinklein, 573/882-9631, trinkleind@missouri.edu.

February 20 & 21: Landscape Design With Missouri In Mind; Dept. of Conservation, Kirksville. 8-4. For info. call me at 660-665-9866. The program is same both days.

March 12: High Tunnel Workshop, State Fruit Experiment Station, Mtn. Grove, MO. Registration fee \$20; includes lunch and handouts. Contact Pamela Mayer, 417-547-7533. PMayer@MissouriState.edu

April 4: "Spring Forward" workshop: Macon Vo-Tech. Hosted by Macon-Shelby MG's. Watch for details.

April 16: Adair County Lady Landowner Workshop, Kirksville. Watch for more information.

ROSE FACTS YOU MAY NOT KNOW

Happy Valentine's Day! Roses are the traditional gift given on Valentine's Day, but they're certain to be well-received any time of year. One single perfect red rose framed with baby's breath is referred to by some florists as a "signature rose," and is the preferred choice for many for giving on Valentine's Day, anniversary, or birthday. The red rose was the favorite flower of Venus, the Roman goddess of love. Red stands for strong feelings, which is why a red rose is a flower of love. Seventy-three percent of Valentine Day flowers are bought by men, whereas women buy only 23% of Valentine flowers.



The color of a rose can have a very different meaning from what you intend. Here are some rose colors and their meanings: Red roses proclaim "I love you." They are the ultimate symbol of romantic love and enduring passion. Florists can't keep up with Valentines Day demand for red roses, which makes them especially expensive in February.

Yellow roses indicate friendship and freedom -- so don't send them if your intentions are romantic and long-lasting. Yellow roses are also appropriate for sending congratulations to newlyweds, graduates, Texans, and new mothers. Orange roses communicate enthusiasm and desire on the part of the sender. Peach roses speak of appreciation, gratitude, and also sympathy.

Coral roses express one thing with their passionate color: Desire. Pale pink roses connote grace, gentleness, and gratitude. A joy to behold, light pink roses express fun and happiness. Deep pink roses say "Thank you." Lilac roses indicate the sender has fallen in love at first sight with the recipient and is enchanted. Pure white roses symbolize truth and innocence. They also send other messages: "I miss you" and "You're heavenly." Regardless of the original color, dead roses say "It's over" loud and clear.

California produces 60 percent of American roses, but the vast number sold on Valentine's Day in the United States are imported, mostly from South America. Approximately 110 million roses, the majority red, will be sold and delivered within a three-day time period. There are nearly 900 acres of greenhouse dedicated to the production of fresh-cut roses in the U.S. One acre of greenhouse rose production in the U.S. is valued at about one million dollars, which includes the value of the plants, greenhouse structure and land.

The rose is native to the United States. The oldest fossilized imprint of the rose was left on a slate deposit found in Florissant, Colorado. It is estimated to be 35 million years old.

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The rose is the official National Floral emblem of the United States. This legislation was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on October 7, 1986. The rose is also the state flower selected by Georgia, Iowa, New York, North Dakota and the District of Columbia.

George Washington, our first President, was also our first U.S. rose breeder!

The world's largest rose-bush is located in Tombstone, Arizona. It is almost two hundred years old and is adorned with more than two hundred thousand white blooms when in full bloom. Its trunk is nearly six feet in diameter, and its branches form a canopy large enough to shelter a crowd of 150 people.

2009 ALL-AMERICA ROSE SELECTIONS

The All-America Rose Selections (AARS) is a nonprofit organization that promotes the best new rose varieties. AARS award winners have been evaluated around the country in an extensive two-year testing program, which judges everything from disease resistance to flower production to color and fragrance. Three outstanding roses were chosen for 2009. Look for them in nurseries and garden centers this winter and spring.

Pink Promise is a beautiful, long-stemmed, pink hybrid tea with strong fragrance. It makes a great cut flower. The National Breast Cancer Foundation selected this rose to officially represent a continual blooming promise of compassion and awareness. For every Pink Promise plant purchased, a percentage of the sales will be donated to the National Breast Cancer Foundation to help extend women's lives through education and early detection. Pink Promise was introduced on the Bayer Advanced Float in the 2009 Tournament of Roses Parade.

Cinco de Mayo is a free-blooming, versatile floribunda with eye-catching clusters of smoked lavender and rusty red, apple-scented flowers. It's an excellent landscape rose with disease-resistant, glossy, deep green foliage.

Carefree Spirit is a dependable, easy-to-grow shrub rose bearing an abundance of single, cherry red blooms in huge clusters. As is true with all Carefree roses, it is an excellent disease-resistant, landscape plant with an exceptionally long bloom period.

Source: January Garden Gazette from Bayer Advanced; BayerAdvanced.com

2009 ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS

Viola F1 'Rain Blue and Purple', AAS® Cool Season Bedding Plant Award Winner

This variety creates a spreading pool of cool blue colors. The plants are cold and heat tolerant resulting in flowers throughout the seasons. *Viola 'Rain Blue and Purple'* will bloom in the south during fall and winter; in the north in the spring and summer. There is always a season of bloom for *'Rain Blue and Purple.'* Another appealing trait is that the one and a half inch blooms change color from purple and white to purple and blue as they mature. Few flowers change colors naturally and *'Rain Blue and Purple'* is one of them. The plants spread 10 to 14 inches in the garden or container. The trailing habit is perfectly designed for hanging baskets or patio urns. *'Rain Blue and Purple'* was bred by Tokita Seed Co. Ltd., Saitama, Japan. Seed and plants of this AAS® Winner will be available from your favorite retailer.

Genus species: *Viola cornuta*

Common names: Johnny Jump-Up

Unique qualities: Creeping habit, flower color changes naturally from purple/white to purple/blue

Flower size: 1 1/2 inches

Color(s): Purple/white to purple/blue

Plant height: 6 inches

Plant width: Spreads 10 to 14 inches

Garden spacing: 10 to 12 inches

Length of time from sowing seed to flower: 70 days

Closest comparison(s) on market: *'Alpine F1 Violet & White,' 'Viola F1 'Rebel Blue'*

Eggplant F1 'Gretel', AAS® Vegetable Award Winner

The earliest white eggplant perfectly describes *'Gretel.'* Any gardener will agree, the earlier the better; since waiting for the best tasting, most nutritious food from our gardens is not easy. The glossy white mini-fruit are produced in clusters and can be harvested in 55 days depending upon growing conditions. Like all eggplants, *'Gretel'* will grow rapidly under warm temperatures, over 55 degrees day and night temperature. The pure white fruit are sweet with tender skin even if they mature beyond the ideal fruit size of 3 to 4 inches. This trait means gardeners have a longer timeline to harvest fruit. *'Gretel'* plants are relatively small, about 3 feet wide and tall. Since the plant is small it is adaptable to the popular trend of growing edibles in containers. It is recommended to use a rather large container about 16 inches deep. This AAS® Winner was bred by Seminis Vegetable Seeds, Oxnard, CA.

Genus species: *Solanum melongena*

Common names: Eggplant, Aubergine

Fruit size: Clustering fruit can be harvested at 3 inches or longer

Fruit shape: Elongated-teardrop

Color: Glossy white fruit

Plant height: 3 feet tall

Plant width: 3 feet wide

Plant habit: Small compact plant adaptable to containers

Garden spacing: 2 feet apart

Unique qualities: Earliest white eggplant, non-bitter fruit, tender skin, few seeds

Length of time from transplanting to harvest: 55 days

Closest comparison(s) on market: 'Little Fingers,' 'Fairy Tale,' 'Snowy'

Melon F1 'Lambkin', AAS® Vegetable Award Winner

The most important trait of this melon is the flavor. This is the reason to invest your time to grow 'Lambkin' in your garden. The oval shaped melon weighs between 2 and 4 pounds with a thin rind surrounding sweet, aromatic, white, juicy flesh. Another advantage is the earliness. Most other gourmet melons of this type mature much later than the 65 to 75 days of 'Lambkin.' Because of the early harvest, the vigorous vines can produce more melons. This results in more melons to share with close friends. It is classified as a Piel de Sapo melon a. k. a. Christmas type. The yellow melon skin with green mottling is unique and named, Piel de Sapo. As a Christmas melon, 'Lambkin' can be stored longer than other melons. They should be stored in a cool place such as a refrigerator. 'Lambkin' was bred by Known-You Seed Co. Ltd., Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Seed and plants of 'Lambkin' will be available in retail stores.

Genus species: *Cucumis melo L.*

Common names: Christmas melon, Piel de Sapo type

Fruit size: 2 to 4 pounds

Fruit shape: Oval

Color: Light yellow skin with green mottling, white flesh

Plant height: 9 3/4 inches

Plant habit: Vigorous vines spreading 6 feet or more

Garden spacing: Rows 6 feet apart

Unique qualities: Sweet aromatic white juicy flesh, early maturity, stores well

Length of time from transplanting to harvest: 65 to 75 days

Closest comparison(s) on market: 'Aladdin,' 'Saporosa'

Squash F1 'Honey Bear', AAS® Vegetable Award Winner

'Honey Bear' acorn squash was bred to be baked and served in the half shell. The honey in 'Honey Bear' refers to the sweet squash flavor when cooked. In addition to flavor, there are three outstanding qualities; the compact plant, high yield, and tolerance to powdery mildew. The bushy, compact plant will reach 2 to 3 feet tall and spread 4 to 5 feet without vines. The dark green acorn squash weighs about a pound, which is a perfect size for sharing between two people. The plant produces 3 to 5 fruit per bush. The yield is high due to the powdery mildew tolerance. At the end of the season many acorn squash plants succumb to the mildew and fruit on the plant never matures. 'Honey Bear' continues to bear fruit throughout the growing season. From sowing seed in the garden until the harvest of the first squash will be about 100 days. 'Honey Bear' was bred at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH.

Genus species: *Cucurbita pepo L.*

Common names: Acorn squash

Fruit size: 1 pound

Fruit shape: Round to slightly oval with rounded blossom end and shallow ribbing

Color: Dark green

Plant height: 2 to 3 feet tall

Plant width: 4 to 5 feet spread

Plant habit: Bushy compact plant

Garden spacing: 2 feet by 6 feet

Unique qualities: Exceptional eating quality, powdery mildew tolerance

Length of time from sowing seed to harvest: 100 days

Closest comparison(s) on market: 'Table Ace,' 'Table Queen,' 'Autumn Delight'

SOURCE: All-America Selections. See photos of these selections at <http://www.all-americanselections.org/Winners.asp>

2008 Northeast Missouri Master Gardener Hours

Master Gardeners from all 16 northeast Missouri counties reported volunteer hours for 2008. Master Gardeners volunteered their time helping with Garden n' Grow; various beautification projects; MO-Dot Adopt-A Spot, educational gardening programs; public consultations; radio interviews; helping the elderly with yards and gardens; judging horticulture exhibits at county fairs; folding and stuffing the "Garden Talk" newsletter; plant sales; 4-H horticulture project leader; among many other activities and projects.

A total of 115 Master Gardeners from the northeast region reported a total of 4,972.25 hours. Of this, 4,077 were "service" hours and 895.25 were continuing education hours. The Independent Sector values volunteer "service" performed in 2007 at an hourly rate of \$19.51 (data for 2008 are to be released in spring 2009). Using this figure, northeast Missouri Master Gardeners volunteered \$79,542.27 worth of their time to projects.

Master Gardeners now have the ability to enter 2009 volunteer hours online. We will be going over how to use the online reporting system at Master Gardener meetings this year.

Note: We do not have a horticulture answer service in the northeast region. This is where the public calls in at a designated time and you answer their questions. If you live in the northeast region, all questions that you answer from the general public will be coded "public consultation" or PA. Only the larger cities have answer services also known as "Master Gardener Hotlines". We also need to keep track of contacts. Please keep track of the number of people who are at any program you give and the number of people whom you provide consultations for. The number of people attending your monthly MG meeting are not considered contacts, only people you serve. Please email or call me if you have further questions. If you do not have an MG club advisor, I will attend one of your meetings this year to explain the online reporting system.

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 for shady gardens that may push up through snow to bloom now.
- Take geranium cuttings now. Keep foliage dry to avoid leaf & stem diseases.
- Sow seeds of larkspur, sweet peas, Shirley poppies and snapdragons where they are to grow outdoors now. To bloom best, these plants must sprout and begin growth well before warm weather arrives.
- Seeds of slow-growing annuals like ageratum, verbena, petunias, geraniums, coleus, impatiens and salvia may be started indoors now.
- Start tuberous begonias indoors now. "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 scratching 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

- Run a germination test on seeds stored from previous years.
- Season extending devices such as cold frames, hot beds, cloches and floating row covers will allow for an early start to the growing season.
- If soil conditions allow, take a chance sowing peas, lettuce, spinach and radish. If the weather obliges, you will be rewarded with extra early harvests.
- Sow seeds of broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and cabbage indoors now for transplanting into the garden later this spring.

Miscellaneous

- When sowing seeds indoors, be sure to use sterile soil mediums to prevent diseases. As soon as seeds sprout, provide ample light to encourage stocky growth.
- Repot any root-bound house plants now before vigorous growth occurs. Choose a new container that is only 1 or 2 inches larger in diameter than the old pot.
- To avoid injury to lawns, keep foot traffic to a minimum when soils are wet or frozen.
- Branches of pussy willow, quince, crabapple, forsythia, pear and flowering cherry may be forced indoors. Place cut stems in a vase of water and change the water every 4 days.
- Maple sugaring time is here! Freezing nights and mild days make the sap flow.

-Missouri Botanical Garden-

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 2: Fabius MG club mtg, 6:30 Presbyterian Church, Memphis.

February 3: Heartland MG club mtg; Brookfield Area Career Center, 7 pm. Bring any rare or unusual seed or nursery catalogs that you may have.

February 3: Salt River MG mtg; 7 pm, Palmyra Sesquicentennial Bldg, program: Nan Poage-vegetable gardening.

February 3: Sullivan County MG meeting. American Legion Building, Milan, MO.

February 10: Magic City Master Gardener meeting. 6:30 pm.

February 11: Putnam County Extension Night, Putnam County High School, Unionville, 6-9 pm.

February 16-18: Missouri Small Fruit and Vegetable Conference, Springfield, Missouri. Visit <http://www.mtngvr.missouristate.edu/commercial/conference.htm>.

February 17: Kirksville Area MG club meeting, 7:00 pm, Adair County Extension Center.

February 21: Missouri Organic Conference; Lincoln University's Carver Farm, Jefferson City. Register online at <http://www.missouriorganic.org/>

February 23: Macon-Shelby MG mtg, 7 pm, Macon Extension Center

March 6: State MG Advisory Board meeting; Columbia, 9-4.

March 7: The Gardener's Palette; John Wood Community College, Quincy, IL. 9:00-3:30, \$40.

March 22-26: Master Gardener International Conference, Las Vegas. <http://www.unce.unr.edu/imgc/>



Garden Talk!

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