



# Garden Talk!

for the Heartland Garden Enthusiast

February 2003

## What's Inside

- 2003 All American Award Winners
- E-911 Addresses Needed
- Missouri Vegetable Statistics
- Vegetables of Merit
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 10: Master Gardener training begins in Kirksville. Contact Jennifer for more info.
- February 17-19: Missouri Small Fruit Conference, Clarion Inn, Springfield, MO. Contact Pat Byers at the Southwest MO State Fruit Experiment Station at 417-926-4105.
- February 21-22: 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference for Missouri Tree Farmers and Private Woodland Owners, Country Club Hotel, Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri; contact Julie Rhoads at 573-882-3234.
- February 26: Turf Issues.....Management Strategies for Golf Courses, Athletic Fields, and Open Spaces, Shelbina Lakeside Golf Course Community Room; contact Wanda Eubank at 573-672-3221.
- April 5: "Spring Forward Into Gardening", educational workshop. See inside for more details.



## Selecting The Perfect Flowers For Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is fast approaching and on that special day millions of people around the world will be receiving flowers, and just maybe you will be one of those persons. Valentine's Day is the busiest holiday of the year for the floral industry.

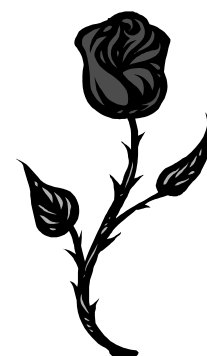
There is nothing more romantic or special than receiving flowers from someone you love. Just because, or as a gesture to say "I Love You", flowers make a lasting impression on someone. Flowers touch the heart like nothing else. They're perfect for conveying feelings of warmth and caring for both holiday and personal occasions. With a little preparation beforehand, selecting the right flowers is quick and easy.

Flowers come in hundreds of shapes and sizes. When it comes to Valentine's Day gifts, selecting the flower varieties and colors you send will result in a thoughtful, customized gift your special someone will treasure. The first step is to consider preference. What colors does he or she like? Men respond well to vivid, crisp colors such as red, orange, purple, and blue. Women tend to relish pastel tones of peach, pink, and lavender. Ask yourself what message you want to convey. Consult with your florist who can explain the assortment of possibilities available. Also, how much can you spend on flowers? Flower arrangements can range in price from a few dollars to over a hundred. Keep in mind roses are one of the most expensive flowers.

There are many other flowers to choose from though such as sunflowers, carnations, mums, daisies, liatris, lisianthus, snapdragons, and lilies. Look for flowers where the bud shows some color. Flowers that are fully open will not last as long as those that are only partially open. If you do not purchase your flowers from a floral shop, you can check out the floral section at your nearby grocery store or discount store. Often they have roses and flower bouquets for nearly half the cost you would pay at floral shop.

## Why Are Roses More Expensive On Valentine's Day: A Simple Case of Supply and Demand

Valentine's Day inspires the heaviest demand for long-stemmed roses, and several rosebuds must be sacrificed to create a single long-stemmed rose. After the Christmas season demand for red roses is filled, growers need 50-70 days to produce enough roses for Valentine's Day. Winter's shorter daylight hours and higher energy costs hamper efforts to grow large rose crops. Inclement weather often requires extreme measures to ensure that flowers are delivered in time. To fulfill the tremendous number of orders for Valentine's Day flowers, florists have to hire additional help, work longer hours and acquire extra delivery vehicles and drivers. In order to meet the heavy consumer demand for Valentine's Day roses, imports have played a much bigger role in recent years. In short, roses in February are every bit as special as you would expect.



# 2003 ALL AMERICA AWARD WINNERS



This year brought a bumper crop of new garden plant introductions. Ten ornamental garden plants and two garden vegetables have been awarded the prestigious honor of All America Selections (AAS) for 2003. These new cultivars have been judged as superior in their class based on their performance in test gardens all over the country.

*Summer Squash 'Papaya Pear'* was selected for its unusual shape and early production on semi-bush-type plants. The bright yellow squash is shaped similar to a tropical papaya fruit or a light bulb with the widest section near the blossom end. 'Papaya Pear' fruit can be harvested in about 40 days from sowing seed.

*Melon 'Angel'* is an early Mediterranean-type melon with crisp, white flesh and outstanding sweet flavor. The lightly netted melon skin will turn creamy yellow when mature, making it easy to tell when to harvest. Fruits are ready in about 60 days from transplant. 'Angel' is a vigorous vine, spreading up to 7 feet, and is resistant to fusarium wilt races 0 and 2.

"Tall, dark and handsome" is how All America Selections describes the ornamental millet '*Purple Majesty*'. The leaves start out green and develop a deep purple color with exposure to full sun. Plants reach up to 5 feet tall with 8- to 12-inch dark purple flower spikes. The immature spikes can be used for flower arrangements, or they can be allowed to mature on the plant where they will provide food for birds. 'Purple Majesty' is very easy to grow and very tolerant of heat and low moisture.

*Carnation 'Can Can Scarlet'* was selected for its fragrance and versatility as a bedding plant, as well as a cut flower. 'Can Can Scarlet' is heat tolerant and flowers freely throughout

the growing season. The plant reaches about 12 inches in height and its gray-green foliage provides good background for the bright scarlet blooms.

*Dianthus 'Corona Cherry Magic'* has large, whimsical bicolor blooms that can be entirely cherry red, entirely lavender or a mosaic of both colors. The plants reach up to 9 inches tall with a similar spread.

*Eustoma 'Forever White'* was selected for its ivory-white blooms on plants with an improved garden performance. Eustoma can be a rather leggy plant in need of support in the garden. 'Forever White' bears large 2 1/2-inch blooms on compact, well-branched 12-inch plants, lending its use in both flower beds and containers.

*Gaillardia pulchella 'Sundance Bicolor'* is the first consistent mahogany red-and-yellow bicolor gaillardia flower. Plants have a spreading habit, reaching up to 16 inches across, and are ideal for hanging baskets and other containers.

*Petunia 'Blue Wave'* continues the "Wave" series of cascading ground cover petunias. The plant reaches 4-7 inches tall but spreads up to 4 feet, sporting velvety, dark-blue 2-inch blooms. Best of all, no pinching or pruning is required to keep the plants blooming all season.

*Petunia 'Merlin Blue Morn'* was selected for its bicolored blooms that are pure white in the center, gradually merging into velvety blue toward the edge. The plants reach up to 20 inches tall, with an equal or greater spread, and are well-adapted to hanging baskets and container gardens.

*Rudbeckia hirta 'Prairie Sun'* is what you might call a "green-eyed Susan" with large 5-inch flower heads. The light green central cone is set among golden-yellow ray flowers, tipped with primrose yellow. The 3-foot-tall plants

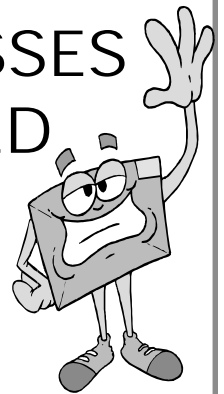
can be grown as annuals or perennials and can also be used for cut flowers.

*Vinca 'Jairo Dark Red'* sports really red blossoms with a small, white center. The 2 1/2-inch flowers contrast nicely with the glossy, green foliage. Plants reach up to 15 inches with a bit larger spread.

Although usually thought of as an herb rather than a garden flower, *Agastache foeniculum 'Golden Jubilee'* was chosen for its dense, lavender-blue spikes that arrive in mid to late summer, just as many other garden flowers are looking a bit peaked. The foliage is a yellowish-green, reaching a height of about 20 inches, with a minty fragrance. While you might think the name is related to the foliage color, it actually commemorates the 50-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

## 911 ADDRESSES NEEDED

If you recently received a new 911 address, or want to be taken off the newsletter mail list, please notify us so we can update our mailing list. You can call the Adair County Extension Office at 660-665-9866 or you can email me at [barnesje@missouri.edu](mailto:barnesje@missouri.edu).



# SPRING FORWARD INTO GARDENING....

WHAT: Educational Workshop Sponsored By: Salt River Master Gardeners & University Outreach & Extension

Six Morning Sessions to choose from:

- Container Gardening
- Create the Next Best Thing
- Culinary Herbs
- Daylilies
- Hostas-Jewels of the Shade

*Creating Gardens for the Soul:*

*Afternoon Keynote Speaker-Linda Kraft*

Linda is a St. Louis garden designer and writer who views her work as "The fine Art of Garden Design". The afternoon lecture will explore what a garden for the soul is, why we love to garden, how gardens bring beauty, depth, and meaning into our lives, and how to create a garden for the soul.

WHO: open to all master gardeners and anyone interested in gardening. Spread the word, bring a friend!

WHEN: Saturday, April 5, 2003; 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

WHERE: Partee Center at Hannibal LaGrange College, Highway 61, Hannibal, Missouri

For more information contact Alix Carpenter at 573-769-2177.

## MISSOURI VEGETABLE STATISTICS

There are nearly 36,000 acres of land in commercial vegetable production in Missouri. Sixty-five percent of these vegetables are irrigated.

### TOP 10 COMMERCIAL VEGETABLES IN MISSOURI

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Cucumbers (processing)                         | 6. Pumpkins      |
| 2. Irish Potatoes (processing; used for chipping) | 7. Sweet Corn    |
| 3. Watermelons                                    | 8. Canteloupe    |
| 4. Snapbeans                                      | 9. Summer Squash |
| 5. Southern Peas                                  | 10. Tomatoes     |

### LEADING VEGETABLE PRODUCING COUNTIES IN MISSOURI

Dunklin (Bootheel)	Mississippi (Bootheel)
Barton (SW)	Newton (SW)
Jasper (SW)	

### VEGETABLE MARKETING IN MISSOURI

52% of vegetables are marketed for processing  
25% are marketed to wholesale buyers  
23% direct marketed

## VEGETABLES OF MERIT FOR 2003

BEANS: 'Ambra', 'Dusky';  
yellow wax beans:  
'Goldito', 'Sunburst',  
'Romano Gold'

BROCCOLI: 'Patriot CMS',  
'Emerald Pride', 'Gypsy',  
'Decathlon'

CABBAGE: 'Blue Lagoon',  
'Blue Thunder',  
'Early Thunder'

CARROTS: 'Recoleta',  
'Cellobunch', 'Six Shooter'

CORN: 'Obsession',  
'Providence', 'Accord',  
'Brocade TSW', 'Whiteout',  
'Luscious TSW'

CUCUMBERS: 'Jackson  
Classic', 'Zapata',  
'Thunderbird', 'Stonewall'

LEEKs: 'Arena', 'Tadorna',  
'Norton', 'Parton'

MUSKMELONS: 'Sugar  
Bowl', 'Angel'

ONIONS: 'Ricochet', 'Moun-  
taineer'

PEPPERS: 'Redstart',  
'Red Dawn', 'Aristotle X3R',  
'Patriot', 'Socrates X3R',  
'Super Shepherd'

PUMPKIN: 'Sorcerer',  
'Schooltime'

SQUASH: 'Bush', 'Delicata',  
'Autumn Delight', 'Sunray',  
'Papaya Pear'

TOMATO: 'Florida 47 VFF',  
'Sunoma VFFT'



# GARDEN TIPS FOR FEBRUARY

## VEGETABLES

### All Month

- Run a germination test on seeds stored from previous years to see if they will still sprout.
- Season extending devices such as cold frames, hot beds, and floating row covers will allow for an early start on the growing season.

- Start onion seeds indoors now.

### Weeks 2-4

- Sow celery seeds indoors now.

### Weeks 3-4

- Sow seeds of broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, and cabbage indoors now for transplanting into the garden later this spring.
- If soil conditions allow, take a chance sowing peas, lettuce, spinach, and radish.

## FRUITS

### All Month

- Check fruit trees for tent caterpillar egg masses. These are laid on twigs in tight clusters that resemble an oblong brown lump of gum wrapped around the stem. Prune these twigs or destroy the eggs by scratching off the clusters with your thumbnail.

### Weeks 1-2

- Collect scion wood now for grafting of fruit trees later in spring. Wrap bundled scions with plastic and store them in the refrigerator.

### Weeks 3-4

- Begin pruning fruit trees. Start with apples and pears. Peaches and nectarines should be pruned just before they bloom.
- When pruning diseased branches, sterilize tools with one part bleach, nine parts water solution between cuts. Dry your tools at day's end and rub them lightly with oil to prevent rusting.
- Grapes and bramble fruits may be pruned now.

### Week 4

- 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.

## ORNAMENTALS

### All Month

- 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.

- Enjoy the fragrant blooms of witch hazel flowering in shrub borders or wooded areas on warm, sunny days.

- Take geranium cuttings now. Keep the foliage dry to avoid leaf and stem diseases.

### Weeks 2-3

- Seeds of slow-growing annuals like ageratum, verbena, petunias, geraniums, coleus, impatiens, and salvia may be started indoors now.

### Weeks 2-4

- Sow seeds of larkspur, sweet peas, shirley poppies, and snapdragons where they are to grow outdoors. For best bloom, these plants must sprout and begin growth well before warm weather arrives.

### Week 4

- Dormant sprays can be applied to ornamental trees and shrubs now. Do this on a mild day while temperatures are above freezing.

- Start tuberous begonias indoors.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### All Month

- To avoid injury to lawns, keep foot traffic to a minimum when soils are wet or frozen.
- To extend the vase life of cut flowers you should:
  - Recut the stems underwater with a sharp knife.
  - Remove any stem foliage that would be underwater.
  - Use a commercial flower preservative.
  - Display flowers in a cool spot, away from direct sunlight.
- 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.

- When sowing seeds indoors, be sure to use sterile soil medium to prevent diseases. As soon as seeds spout, provide ample light to encourage stocky growth.

### Weeks 1-2

- Branches of pussy willow, quince, crabapple, forsythia, pear, & flowering cherry may be forced indoors. Place cut stems in a vase of water and change the water every 4 days.

- Now is a good time to identify trees by their winter twigs and buds.

### Weeks 2-4

- Maple sugaring time is here! Freezing nights and mild days make the sap flow.

- Begin to fertilize house plants as they show signs of new growth.

Plants that are still resting should receive no fertilizers yet.

- Watch for squirrels feeding on the tender, swollen buds of elms, hickories, oaks, and other trees as spring approaches.

### Weeks 3-4

- Save grape vine prunings for making into attractive wreaths and other craft objects.

- Now is a good time to apply appropriate sprays for the control of lawn weeds such as chickweed and dandelion.

- Tall and leggy houseplants such as dracaena, dieffenbachia, and rubber plants may be air layered now.

### Week 4

- Encourage birds to nest in your yard by providing water and putting up bird houses. Planting suitable shrubs, trees, vines, and evergreens will provide wild food sources and nesting habitat.

- Late winter storms often bury birds' natural food supplies and a well-stocked feeding station will provide a life-giving haven for our feathered friends.



## Garden Talk!

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