



Gwinnett County Agent: Timothy Daly

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Roses provide endless beauty if given proper care

Roses are one of the most popular garden flowers. Roses generally require a higher level of care than most other garden plants, but the results are worth the extra effort.



The hybrid tea roses come in many different colors and sizes. They are valued for their colorful flowers and fragrance. (Photograph by Timothy Daly)

The classification of roses is based on their growth habit and flower form. Hybrid tea roses have a strong upright growth habit and produce single large flowers at the end of their long stems. These roses are somewhat challenging to grow since they have greater maintenance requirements and are more susceptible to pests than other types.

Floribunda roses produce abundant flowers throughout the growing season. Although they have smaller flowers than the hybrid tea roses, they produce more flowers that are borne in large clusters along their stems. Grandiflora roses have the attributes of both the hybrid tea and floribunda roses in that they have long stems and large flowers borne in clusters. Climbing roses have a vine-like growth habit and form dense clusters of flowers. They require support, such as a trellis or fence. Shrub roses are smaller in size and have a denser growth habit than other types. They are valued for their season long production of flowers and their dense foliage. The popular Knockout™ Rose is one example of a shrub-type rose.

Roses require full sun and well-drained fertile soils. The fall and winter months are the best time for planting. Roses should be planted in holes that are twice the size of the root ball and no deeper than the top of it. Then apply a 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch to the ground beneath the plants. They should be thoroughly watered once a week with the water penetrating deeply into the root zone. Once established, apply 3 tablespoons of an all-purpose fertilizer, such as 10-10-10, to each plant monthly during the growing season. Broadcast it in a circular pattern on the ground around the plants.

In general, roses should be pruned in late winter before new growth appears in spring since this will help promote increased blooming. Climbing roses are the exception. They should be pruned in the spring after the first blooms begin to fade. Use sharp pruning tools and make the cuts just above the buds.

If you are willing to do a little extra work in your garden, roses will produce attractive colorful blooms throughout the growing season. Their display of beauty is why roses are among the most favorite of garden plants.



'Knockout Roses' (top) and 'Nearly Wild' roses are shrub roses and are resistant to many of the diseases and insects that trouble other roses. (Photograph by Timothy Daly)

Most insects are harmless and some are even beneficial

At any given time, there are hundreds or even thousands of insect species present in your backyard. However, the sight of them can be disturbing to many. True, some species damage our lawns and garden plants, inflict painful stings, carry diseases, and cause damage to structures. These represent less than 3 percent of all insect species. The other 97 percent are harmless or even beneficial. They play an important role in the ecosystem. Life on earth as we know it could not exist without them.



*A convergent lady beetle feeding on aphids.
(Photograph by R.J. Reynolds
Tobacco Company Slide Set)*

Insects pollinate a large number of plants species, particularly many of the fruit trees and vegetables we use for food. Honeybees are perhaps the most familiar. Their decline due to a variety of factors has affected fruit production in many areas of the country. Honeybee hives are sometimes shipped to orchards in order to provide pollination where natural populations are lacking. Other pollinators include bumble bees, butterflies, moths, and certain species of flies and beetles.

As scavengers and decomposers, insects play a vital role breaking down dead organic plant and animal material whereby the nutrients are returned to the soil. Flies and dung beetles decompose manure from large animals and increase the rate of decomposition by fungi and bacteria. Termites are

destructive insects in that they damage wood in building structures. However, in the wild, they consume dead trees and other plants where they break the material down for nutrient recycling. Roaches, ants, and other insects which can infest our homes also play a role as decomposers in natural areas.

Several species of insects feed on pestiferous ones. Lady beetles and lace wings are predators on soft bodied insects such as aphids, whiteflies and mealybugs. Recently, the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, released over 70,000 lady beetles to control an

outbreak of aphids on its thousands of indoor plants as an alternative to using pesticides. Several species of wasps and flies also parasitize harmful insects. An example is in vegetable gardens where tomato hornworms sometimes can be observed with small white balls attached to them. These are the cocoons of a species of parasitic wasps that lays eggs on the host and the larvae feed inside it.

Insects are very diverse, and most species are not detrimental. They provide us with food, control harmful insects, and help break down dead organic matter. So next time you encounter insects, even the bad ones, realize they are in the minority and that many others are beneficial.

Timely tips for summer

- Prune summer-flowering shrubs like gardenias and bigleaf hydrangeas after they finish flowering.
- Reinvigorate annual flowers by cutting them back to one-half their height and fertilizing them with one-half cup of 10-10-10 all-purpose fertilizer per square yard.
- If you see large black caterpillars with orange stripes consuming leaves on your oak trees, these are oak worms. They defoliate parts of oak trees, but do not kill the tree. Pesticide applications are not necessary.
- The best strategy to control mosquitoes is to eliminating breeding areas by cleaning gutters, replacing the water in birdbaths, dumping flowerpot saucers, and removing other standing water.
- Prune off old crape myrtle before they form seedpods. Depending on the cultivar, they may produce flowers into the fall.
- If your grass starts turning a bluish-green color and lies flat after being walked on, this is a sign that your lawn needs to be watered. Apply water thoroughly for deep soil penetration to encourage the development of a healthy root system.
- Remove old plants that have stopped producing in your vegetable garden. Doing so will reduce insects and disease organisms as well as clear out space for new fall vegetable plantings later in the summer.



Questions and answers

Q. My bermudagrass lawn has suddenly developed several large circular patches of dead grass. The edges have an orange to brown color. Are beetle grubs causing this damage? Should I treat with a lawn insecticide?

A. Your bermudagrass lawn has large patch disease, which is caused by a fungus. It kills the leaf blades but does not affect the roots. If the grass is healthy, it should recover. Since beetle grubs are not the source of the troubles, an insecticide would be useless. To control the disease and reduce the likelihood of occurrence, do not apply excessive amounts of fertilizer with a high-nitrogen content. Also, water the lawn earlier in the day before noon. You can apply fungicides that are labeled for turfgrasses to your lawn. Make sure you follow label directions and safety precautions when using pesticides.

Q. I have a 30-foot-high white oak in my backyard. Recently I have observed the appearance of some white spots on the leaves. What is causing this and will it kill my oak? Do I need to have it sprayed with a pesticide?

A. The oaks have one of several fungal leaf spot diseases. The good news is these diseases do not cause harm to the tree. It loses some of its leaves but regenerates new ones. Spraying a pesticide is ineffective and not economical. A good maintenance practice is to rake up and dispose of the leaves that have fallen to avoid further infestation.



Large patch disease affects warm season grasses, such as bermudagrass in the picture above. Avoid excess fertilization, water earlier in the day, and apply fungicides if necessary. (Photograph by Timothy Daly)



Oak leaf blister does not harm the tree, and chemical applications are not economical or effective. Dispose of the fallen leaves. (Photograph by Timothy Daly)

Upcoming Cooperative Extension events for summer 2014

Turfgrass selection and maintenance • June 18

Noon to 1:00pm. Several types of turfgrasses are used for lawns in our area. Each has their positives and negatives. The class will help you determine which turf is the best for your situation and to maintain the lawn you already have. Register by June 16.

Butterfly gardening • July 1

Noon to 1:00pm. The class will cover how to attract butterflies to your garden and some of the most common types in our area. Register by June 27.

Invasive plants • July 30

Noon to 1:00pm. Many non-native plants are invasive and can pose some serious problems for our local ecosystems. Come learn about the various plants that have invasive tendencies and what you can do to prevent their spread. Register by July 28.

These classes are held in the Gwinnett County Cooperative Extension Conference Room in the Gwinnett County Cooperative Extension office, 750 South Perry Street, #400 in Lawrenceville. There is no charge, but registration is required. For more information or to register, contact Timothy Daly at 678.377.4010 or timothy.daly@gwinnettcountry.com.



gwinnettcounty
Cooperative Extension Service
750 South Perry Street • Suite 400
Lawrenceville, GA 30046
678.377.4010
www.gwinnetttextension.com