Signature Rose
'Tahlia'

Central Coast-Lake Macquarie Rose Region

email: cclmregionalrosesecretary@gmail.com

Chairperson: Karen Lucas Thong (**email**: kazzerkat2@outlook.com)

Meetings are on the 3rd Sunday of each month at the Woodbury Park Community Centre

1 Woolmers Cres. Mardi, at 1.30pm for a 2.00pm start

NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2020

FOR THE BUDDING ROSARIANS

Message from the Chair

Hello Rosarians,

These have been trying times and if you are like me, you can hardly wait to get out and mix with other people again. We need to be cautious how we do it and are slowly being able to interact with others again. I don't know when our meetings will resume, but you can be assured that when council contacts me about returning to the Community Hall, I will let you know.

How are your roses going. Mine still have a few blooms, but they are coming to an end as the weather gets colder and the days shorter. This is the time you can have a little rest in regards to your roses, but only a little one, as pruning season will soon be upon us. We want to do all we can to encourage those beautiful spring blooms. Pruning and fertilising are the way to do it.

I have included a newsletter that I receive from "Green E Roses". It has some very good advice and information about roses, so I recommend you read it.

Your Rose Society membership is due this month. Please renew and keep our society going in these tough times. (You will find a membership renewal form accompanying your Winter 2020 edition of NSW Rose.)

Stay safe everyone and I look forward to seeing you all very soon.

Kind regards

Karen Lucas Thong

P/S: I have spoken with CC Council and we have a tentative meeting resumption date for August, all going well. Will confirm this date in the next newsletter.

LESSON 9

COMPOSTING WITHOUT THE NUISANCE

Composting methods for the kitchen and home gardens provide numberous containers and decomposition methods. Once thought of my many gardeners as a messy, rodent-attracting process that could only be successful in a large yard or garden, there are many tips and techniques gardeners can learn to create fly-, gnat- and odor-free small-scale compost at home or in the community garden.

Compost recycles carbon and organic matter from dead plants back into the soil through the decaying action of bacteria and fungi. Just like healthy garden soil, healthy compost is alive with bacteria and archaea, fungi, nematodes, and protozoa. Gardeners are adding both nutrients for plants and valuable soil biology when they develop a successful composting system that cultivates soil biology and nutrient retention. While organic matter will decompose on its own without any human intervention, the process takes much longer than a gardener usually wants to wait. Accelerating and controlling the composting process allows gardeners to minimize both the space, effort, and finishing time needed to turn decayed materials into nutrient-rich soil.

Gardeners can determine which type of compost system best suits their needs and space options. Urban community gardeners might need to use a worm-bin at home, and then bring the finished compost to their garden plot. Options for easy compost systems include: an outdoor layered compost structure, manufactured compost containers or tumblers, and worm bins.

The best way to ensure that a compost system does not become smelly or swarming with gnats is to make sure that aerobic bacteria can thrive with adequate air circulation and a hospitable temperature range.

Contained compost pile options.

COMPOST PILES

The pile system of composing works well in a farm environment as a large, uncontained heap that is turned over from time to time to adjust air circulation, moisture, and temperature. Many cities require that compost piles be contained in some way to deter rodents from making comfy homes for themselves.

Gardeners can build easy, inexpensive containers for compost piles using cinder blocks, untreated wood, hardware cloth, or chicken wire wrapped around fence posts. These options allow air and water to reach the pile while providing gardeners with easy access to the pile for turning, adding ingredients, and monitoring temperature.

Many municipalities sell manufactured enclosed bins and additional pre-built options are available online. Gardeners will need a pitch fork of some sort to turn the pile and a good compost thermometer to monitor the pile as it heats up to 140 and 150F. The pile should not rise above 155 degrees because it will then begin to burn off carbon. Turning the pile acts as a catalyst to heat the pile when it is too cool, and cool the pile if it gets too hot. The pile will need to stay between 104 and 131F for the maturation stage.

TUMBLER BINS

Tumbler bins are popular alternatives to compost piles because they allow gardeners to easily turn the compost without needing a pitch fork and heavy lifting. Gardeners will need to alternate the addition of fresh plant materials with brown materials such as dried leaves to maintain a balance between bacterial and fungal activity in the tumbler. The door also needs to be opened frequently to make sure that oxygen is able to circulate through the compost pile and that temperatures remain in the desired range for bacterial and fungal activity to speed up the decomposition process.

VERMICOMPOSTING

Worm bins, or vermicomposting, allow gardeners to build a contained ecosystem for worms to shred and digest compost and cycle nutrients through their waste. The name "worm bin" ends up being misleading because the container actually becomes more of a "living decay bin" where living organisms thrive on decaying organic matter. Worm composting is an easy way to create garden ready soil on a small scale in a short amount of time. With proper maintenance, it is an excellent way to recycle food waste back into the garden without the mess of flies, gnats, and anaerobic smells.

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LESSON PLAN 9

BUILD A WORM BIN

OBJECTIVES:

Show gardeners how to make an easy vermicomposting system at home with plastic totes.

Emphasize the benefits to soil biology: feeding the soil life is the best way to feed your plant life, and in turn to feed the gardener with produce from the garden.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- One large plastic storage tubs 24 " deep or less with lid (BPA free plastic), wash out in advance and let dry
- Drill with 1/8th in bit for making holes
- Fiber bedding options: Shredded brown paper, newspaper, un-bleached corrugated cardboard, straw, sawdust, coconut pith, or dry grass clippings.
- Two to three cups of good garden soil
- Water for moistening
- One pound of worms such as Red Wigglers (Eisenia fetida)
- An example tub with an established worm population, if available.

ACTIVITY:

1. Drill 1/8 holes around the sides of the bin.
2. Line the bottom bin with at least 4 inches of a fibrous material (unbleached paper, straw, grass, cardboard, etc.).
3. Cover bedding with a layer of soil to inoculate the bedding. Many people believe that "worms eat garbage" or food scraps, but they actually primarily eat the fungi and bacteria that feast on rotting food. Without fungi and bacteria inoculating a bin filled with food scraps, the food rots and smells before it is able to be turned into something the worms can process. The inoculation would happen naturally over time, but if they inoculate initially with garden soil and/or active compost, gardeners can skip the super smelly stage. .
4. Moisten bedding and soil thoroughly with water without flooding.
5. Add worms once the bedding has rested and moistened.
6. Show gardeners an example of an established worm bin and explain tips and techniques for feeding and harvesting the worm compost.
7. Demonstrate techniques for harvesting compost by gently separating worms from compost. The much slower, but equally effective method, involves pushing compost to one side of the bin, placing fresh food in an empty space and waiting for the worms to move out of the compost and toward the new food.

Uncovered worm bin tubs with holes.
Image source: www.growrealfood.com

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR WORMS

- Feed the worms! Red wigglers can eat more than half their body weight in food in a single day. It is best to begin ramping up the feeding levels slowly as the worms begin to reproduce. Gardeners can begin by feeding a small amount once a week in the beginning and then build up to a quart of scraps per square foot of soil surface per week.
- The worms will process kitchen scraps more quickly if gardeners cut them into finer particles before mixing into the bedding. Excellent food scraps for worms include vegetables, bread, coffee grounds, grains, fruits, egg shells, and tea leaves.
- Mixing the scraps into the bedding rather than simply laying them on top will deter fruit flies and fungus gnats, as well as unpleasant odors.
- Show gardeners how to monitor moisture in the bin and discuss when to add moisture or fresh bedding materials as the worms reproduce and increase their composting capacity.
- Watering bins with a rosette-nozzled watering can will help maintain moisture and an environment that feels as wet as a wrung-out sponge. Keeping the surface dry in addition to burying food scraps when adding them will help deter fruit flies and fungus gnats. Add dry carbon-rich materials if the bin becomes too wet.
- Worms prefer a cool to moderate temperature between 30 and 90F.
- Make sure to feed worms the amount and types of food that keep them healthy. Gardeners should avoid feeding their worms citrus, meats, fish, fats, dairy products, animal feces, and large twigs or branches.
- Gardeners should note that earthworms cocoon look like small yellow-orange seeds and newly hatched worms are tiny and white (not to be confused with maggots).
- Gardeners can also expect to see other organisms such as pill bugs appear in the worm bin over time. These bugs help break down organic matter into sizeable chunks that are more easily colonized and broken down by the microbes, which are then eaten by the worms. Too often gardeners see pill bugs in the worm bin and think there is something wrong.
- After 3 to 6 months, the happy worms will produce excellent compost to use for making compost tea or adding directly to the garden.

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LESSON 10

MIX IT UP! CROP ROTATION, INTERCROPPING & SUCCESSION

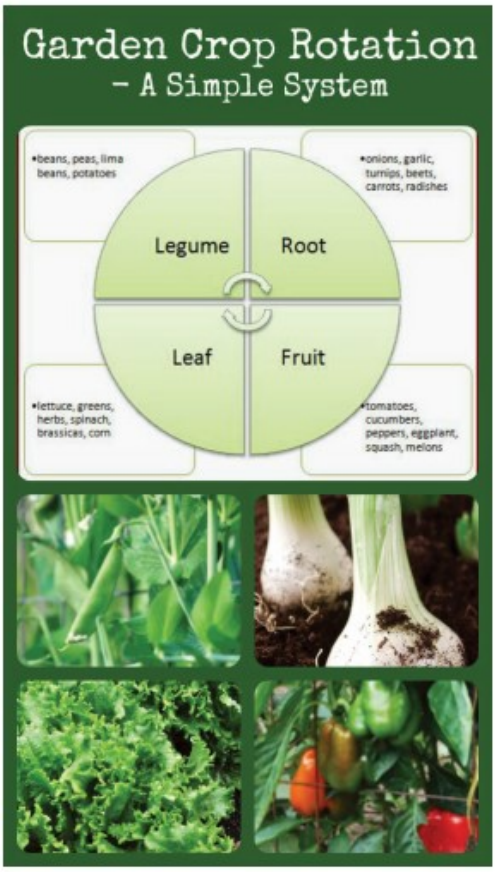
Just as we are healthiest when eating a widely varied diet, organisms in the soil also benefit from a diverse diet of organic material. Plant nutrients come from minerals made available by decaying plants and animals, but roots also exchange nutrients and electrical charges with microorganisms in the soil. Different roots provide different nutrients to the microorganisms, and vice versa. All vegetables have specific nutrient and soil requirements, so by grouping crops with similar needs together and rotating if possible every year, the soil maintains the ability to replenish lost minerals and efficiently support each crop.

Crop rotation (cycling different plants and plant families in the same area) introduces different plant exudates and biological relationships. Because some plants use more of certain nutrients and some plants leave nutrients in the soil after they die (such as nitrogen-fixing legumes), rotating crops and planting a variety of plant families in a bed helps support diverse forms of microbial life. The diverse microbial community nurtures balance in the food web so that one kind of organism or nutrient doesn't get to powerful and throw off the system.

Crop rotation also supports plants' ability to fend off disease and pests by nurturing a more robust and well-nourished plant. Disease spores in the soil can easily be moved from a crop's previous location to the new location, however, the access to different microbial life and nutrients ideally contributes to the overall health and general immunity of the plant.

Succession planting is a practice of replacing short-season crops such as lettuce with new crops in the same location. Intercropping involves planting a short season crop at the same time as a long season crop, and harvesting the first crop before the long season crop (such as tomatoes) reach full size and require more space and nutrients.

Both succession planting and intercropping can provide multiple cycles of nutrient and microbe benefits similar to annual crop rotation during a single growing season. Combined with techniques that add organic matter to well-structured soil, succession planting and intercropping can help community gardeners increase productivity in their limited space while improving overall soil health.



Crop rotations based on parts of plant eaten. Source: http://www.betterhensandgardens.com/wp-content/uploads/Garden-Crop-Rotation-1.jpg

LESSON PLAN 10

PLAN FOR VARIETY

OBJECTIVE:

Teach gardeners how to adapt their garden plans to account for crop rotation, intercropping, and succession planting within the challenges of limited space in a plot.

Demonstrate several garden planning techniques from hand written plans to online square foot gardening planners, and options for determinine season length and short/long season crops.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Garden planning materials for each individual gardener's spring planting plan including paper, pencils, seed packets (for planting and "days to maturity" instructions).
- Optional computer and wireless access for using online garden planning tools like the square foot garden planner at www.gardeners.com

Screenshot from Gardener's Supply Company's free garden planning tool at www.gardeners.com

ACTIVITIES:

1. Ask gardeners to bring their spring garden plan with them or begin the lesson by reviewing a list of vegetable and herb options for spring planting.
2. Suggest resources such as www.motherearthnews.com or www.farmersalmanac.com for determining average first and last frost dates. Review "cool season/warm season" and "days to maturity" information on seed packets. Explain how this information reveals length of growing season and days that gardeners can divide into mini-seasons for succession planting, intercropping and minimal crop rotation. Days to maturity will also be impacted by days getting longer or getting shorter as the sun moves in position in the sky over the summer. Lettuce planted in the spring may take 45 days while the same variety planted in fall may take 55.
3. Discuss how warm weather and long "days to maturity" length crops such as tomatoes, okra, cucumbers, peppers, and eggplant can be added later amid stands of cool weather, short "days to maturity" lettuce or spring peas with proper planning.
4. Review vegetable families and their feeding needs: root vegetables and phosphorous; the nightshade family's need for nitrogen and potassium; the nitrogen-fixing capacity of legumes (beans and peas); relationship between different brassicas and cucurbit plants. These feeding habits influence nutrients left in the soil as well as microbial life.
5. Ask gardeners to develop three years of garden plans or create separate plans for spring, mid-summer, and fall planting. Discuss the complications involved in making these planting decisions (such as the path of light in the garden, placement of trellises, space limitations).
6. Encourage gardeners to be open to experimenting with rotation as it is possible in the limited space of community gardens. Balancing the benefits of rotation and intercropping with the necessities of community gardens by emphasizing that other good gardening techniques also encourage diversity in the soil. While it would be best not to plant tomatoes in the same exact place each year, an awareness of the soil's needs will help gardeners make informed decisions and necessary amendments as they plan their gardens throughout the years.
7. Introduce gardeners to vegetable families as guides for crop rotation. Explain that rotating crops in larger groups based upon the part of a plant we eat provides an easy to remember alternative guide. Categories include: legumes (beans, peas); leaves (lettuce, greens, spinach, herbs); roots (onions, beets, carrots, turnips); and fruits (tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers). In a raised bed plot, crop rotation can be broken into general groups and areas in the garden annually, since traditional crop rotation and field change is not possible.

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Article below reprinted from newsletter by:

Green E Roses

400 Galston Road

Galston, NSW 2159

Rose Care

Coronavirus and social distancing has brought many people into their gardens.

Some of you are confused as to what to do at this time of year, so hopefully these notes will assist.

It is an interesting time of year, the nights are cold and the days are still warm. What is a rose to do?

Weird things you may have observed:

Dry soil. Check your soil moisture level, we have noticed it being very dry, even with the recent rain we have had. Lack of water will encourage fungal problems at this time of year.

Less foliage. It is just the change in weather, cold nights are starting to encourage the roses to go dormant.

You may have noticed black spot occurring on the leaves. Not to panic, it is just the change in weather. The days are warm, encouraging the roses to grow and the nights are cold encouraging the roses to drop their leaves in preparation for dormancy over the winter. You will notice that blackspot never occurs on the youngest leaves, it only occurs on the older ones. Behind these older leaves you will see a new a bud eye. The roses are quite clever, they are stopping the supply of food to the older leaf and given all their energy into the growth of the new bud. If the older leaf didn't get blackspot, it was about to go brown and drop off anyway.

What can you do?
You can do nothing, and let them fall off naturally, however once fallen collect from ground and place in rubbish bin as they can harbour pests on the ground.
You can pick them off with your fingers/secateurs.
You can apply a fungicide spray. We suggest eco-rose/eco fungicide (it is the same product).

Aphids, the little green things on the soft tips of new growth and flower buds. What do they do? They can cause deformed flowers. Ladybirds are the natural enemy of aphids, they enjoy eating them.

What do you do?
Leave the ladybirds to do there thing, alternatively you can squish the aphids with your fingers or apply eco-oil to suffocate them. They eco-oil will not harm the ladybirds.

Caterpillars, the larvae of moths and butterflies. They feed on flower buds and the foliage, creating holes and ragged edges on the rose leaves.

What can you do?
You can hand pick them and drop them in a bucket of soapy water. Alternatively again you can apply an eco-oil spray to help control them.
If you have them in your flower buds, the spray will be ineffective. Cut of the flower buds and discard in the bin.

When do I prune my roses?
We recommend you prune your roses after you have had your last frost.

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email: cclmregionalrosesecretary@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook

We are on the Web!

http://www.nsw.rose.org.au/central-coast-lake-macquarie

Next Meeting

Tahlia Rose

Meetings are on the 3rd Sunday of each month at the Woodbury Park Community Centre, 1 Woolmers Cres. Mardi at 1.30pm for a 2.00pm start

The next meeting will be held on:

TBA due to Corvid restrictions. Tentatively in August 2020.