

Why So Many Weeds?

Gardeners often ask why they have so many weeds. The answer is quite simple, we plant them!

Weed seeds can blow in, wash in with surface water, or be introduced with the application of soils and organic matter, like manure. Birds and other wildlife also distribute weed seeds. However, the majority of weeds come from seed unsuspectingly planted by the gardener. In other words, weeds we allow to go to seed.

For example, a common pigweed plant, with its long reddish taproot, produces one hundred and seventeen thousand seeds per plant. That means just nine pigweed plants allowed to go to seed disseminate over one million seeds! And these seeds are viable for forty years. Purslane, with its pinkish, fleshy stems and leaves, produces fifty-two thousand seeds per plant. Purslane seeds are viable for twenty-five years. And how about the common dandelion? It typically produces only fifteen thousand seeds per plant. So do not let weeds go to seed. A gardener who does not let weeds go to seed will have significantly fewer weeds each year.

Each time the garden is cultivated or tilled, a new crop of weed seeds are brought to the surface and are ready to germinate. To suppress weed germination, avoid unnecessary tilling. Application of a surface mulch, like grass clippings, also helps suppress weed seed germination. (MJF)

2005 All-America Roses

The All-America Rose Selections (AARS) is a nonprofit association of rose growers and introducers dedicated to the introduction and promotion of exceptional roses. Since 1938 the AARS seal of approval has graced outstanding new rose varieties that have withstood the test of time and Mother Nature.

AARS operates a nationwide network of twenty official test gardens dedicated to evaluating roses on all of the characteristics consumers desire in a garden plant. Every AARS winning rose completes an extensive two-year trial program in these test gardens located throughout the country and representing all climate zones. New rose varieties in the AARS trials receive only as much care as would be given in the average home garden. This sophisticated evaluation process results in a new crop of AARS winning roses each year, guaranteeing that only the best make it into your garden. Visit the All-America Rose Selections Web site at www.rose.org

Here are the winners for 2005.

Day Dream is a low-growing compact landscape shrub rose reaching just 2 feet in height. The massive clusters of fuchsia blooms will flower all summer long. Each lightly scented single blossom is wide and flat, resembling a little button. Foliage is glossy, deep green and highly disease resistant. Day Dream's diminutive size and neat round habit make it an appropriate choice for a variety of garden situations.



Day Dream

An upright, spreading shrub rose, **Lady Elsie May** offers a vigorous, uniform growth habit and excellent disease resistance. The flower is coral pink and grows in



Lady Elsie May

clusters on strong 12 to 20 inch cutting stems. Each flower is approximately 3 to 4 inches wide and has 12 to 14 petals. The fragrance is slight and the foliage is dark green and waxed.

About Face is a grandiflora with a very novel "backwards" bicolor whose light color of deep golden yellow is carried on the inside of the petals with a darker bronzy orange-red backside. This

super-vigorous plant yields long stems with full old-fashioned blossoms that catch attention throughout the life of the bloom. The flowers, up to five inches in diameter, offer a mild fresh apple fragrance and are beautifully complemented by lush, clean green leaves.



About Face

ELLE combining a strong spicy, citrus fragrance with a high-centered classic rose bud. This rose is a hybrid tea that produces shell pink flowers with deep yellow undertones. The dark glossy foliage provides a nice contrast to the soft, non-fading flower, and offers above average disease tolerance to mildew and blackspot. Flowers bloom on 10 to 14 inch stems and are 4 to 5 inches wide. (MJF)



ELLE

Garden Guide

Things to do this month

Make successive plantings of beans and sweet corn to extend the harvest season.

Harvest rhubarb by cutting or by grasping the stalk and pulling up and gently to one side.

Grow your own dried flowers. Raise statice, globe amaranth, straw flowers and other everlastings to provide flowers for this year's arrangements.

Plant gladioli bulbs in late May.

Set out marigold, petunia, ageratum and fibrous begonia transplants. All are good border plants.

To grow annuals in containers on the patio, use a light weight soil mixture. Keep the plants well watered, because the soil dries out fast. Apply a water soluble fertilizer according to package directions every two weeks.

Watering roses with soaker hoses or drip irrigation will reduce the spread of black spot disease.

Plant ground covers under shade trees that do not allow enough sunlight to grow grass. Vinca minor or English ivy are ground cover plants that grow well in shade.

Mulch around newly planted trees and shrubs. This practice reduces weeds, controls fluctuations in soil temperature, retains moisture, prevents damage from lawn mowers and looks attractive.

When you visit botanical gardens and arboreta, take your camera and notepad with you. Plan now for changes you will make in your landscape.

For maximum landscape interest in a small, vertical space, try annual vines. They can disguise ugly walls and fences. When trellised, they can create shade and privacy while hiding undesirable views. Try morning glory, nasturtium vine and scarlet runner bean.

Plan a landscaping project on paper first. Do not over plant. Be sure you know the mature size of each plant and allow for growth.

Lawns maintained at the correct height are less likely to have disease and weed infestation. Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue should be mowed at approximately three inches in height. Mow frequently, removing no more than one third of the blade at each cutting.

Grass clippings can be used as a mulch in flower beds and vegetable gardens if allowed to dry well before use. Never use clippings from a lawn that has been treated with a herbicide.

Cabbage loopers and imported cabbage worms are green worms. They eat large holes in the leaves of plants in the cabbage family. For control, caterpillars can be picked off by hand or sprayed with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a natural, non-toxic preparation available by various trade names.

Newly transplanted vegetable plants should be protected from cutworms with collars. Cut strips of cardboard two inches wide by eight inches long, staple them into circles and place them around the plants. Press the collar about one inch into the soil. These collars will fence out the cutworms and protect the stems of the vegetable plants.

Stay out of the garden when the vegetable plant leaves are wet. Walking through a wet garden spreads disease from one plant to another.

Four or five layers of newspaper will serve as an effective mulch in the garden. Cover it with grass clippings or straw to prevent it from blowing away.

Put tools away at the end of the day. Clean them and hang them up so they are ready to use and easy to find when you need them.

Flowers That Tower

Tall perennial plants in your flower beds can bring a sense of drama to your landscape. If you have the space, consider a few of these giants.

Boltonia '**Boltonia asteroides**' — This plant has showy white, aster-like flowers in late

summer. It will get 5 to 7 feet tall and may need staking. Thrives in any garden soil and spreads rapidly in moist conditions. Prefers full sun.

Common sneezeweed or False sunflower '**Helenium autumnale**' — Showy yellow flowers in late summer. 3 to 6 feet tall. Very adaptable, but prefers moist soil and full sun.

False Indigo '**Baptisia australis**' — Forms large clumps. Grows 3 to 5 feet tall. Blue flowers bloom in spring. Prefers full sun to part shade.

Goatsbeard '**Aruncus dioicus**' — Stately perennial that produces creamy-white



Queen-of-the-prairie

plumes of blossoms in early summer. Will grow in sun to part shade. Reaches heights of 4 to 6 feet.

Joe-Pye weed '**Eupatorium purpureum**' — Very showy with purple flower clusters in the fall. 4 to 7 feet

tall. Prefers moist soil and full sun to part shade.

Plume poppy '**Macleaya cordata**' — Handsome, large perennial that grows 5 to 10 feet. Does best in rich, well-drained soil and full sun. Blossoms are creamy-white plumes that reach nearly a foot in length. Warning! This plant spreads vigorously.

Queen-of-the-prairie '**Filipendula rubra**' — Tall and wind tolerant. Reaches heights of 6 to 8 feet tall. Flowers are large, 6 to 9 inch, pink clusters. Prefers moist conditions and full sun to part shade.

Russian sage '**Perovskia atriplicifolia**' — This sage has aromatic gray-green leaves and pale blue flowers in summer. It prefers well-drained soil and full sun. Russian sage will grow to be 3 to 5 feet.

White Mugwort '**Artemisia lactiflora**' — Creamy-white flowers appear in late summer. Attractive foliage reaches 4 to 6 feet. Grows in full sun or part shade. (MJF)



Joe-Pye weed