



## ROSES AND PEONIES

by Richard Lawton

Roses and Peonies hold very soft spots in the hearts of gardeners. Most gardeners acquired their love of plants from an early age while helping mom or grandma with their gardens. Now our gardens will be the memories for our children and grandchildren, so let's make sure the roses and peonies are there for them to remember. Few perennial varieties add more color and enjoyment than do the roses and peonies. New and improved varieties have been added to our choices that make these old standbys even more fun. The one statement that I hear over and over is "I love roses, but I don't have the time to fuss with them". Well, that is not true anymore and peonies properly started will last 100 years plus with very little maintenance. So let's look at adding these wondrous plants to your garden and make some new memories.

The new roses include a group that is referred to as **Landscape or Shrub Roses**. They are bush form and not grown primarily for cutting. The best known in this group is the Knock Out series. My favorite of the knock outs is the original that is known as just **Knock Out**. This plant has a single petal that is rose in color. It is the strongest of the knock out group with the best repeat flowering and least replacements. There are also red and pink knock outs that come in single or double petals. One additional knock out that deserves mention is **Sunny Knock Out**. It is a bigger version that can reach 3-4' and 4' wide. This plant re-blooms well like the original, but has a yellow new flower that quickly fades to cream. It adds a sunny disposition to your garden.

There are a couple other roses that need to be mentioned for the ease of growing (as stated by their names) that are welcome additions to your garden. **Osoeay Paprika** is a small rose of 18-24" in height and width. It has a single flower that ranges from tangerine to paprika in color. This stunning little rose will add spice to your garden. The other easy growing rose that I like is the **Carefree Celebration**. It will get to be 4' in height and width and has a lovely double flower of peach to orange. As its name says it requires less maintenance than the traditional rose.

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Sunny Knock Out

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My mother had peonies with huge flowers that I remember like yesterday. There was one double red plant that all of us had our picture taken with in our cap and gown. We moved before my younger sister graduated and we went back to get her picture taken with that plant.

Peonies came originally from China where their images have been recorded for hundreds of years. They are very easy to care for, given a good start they will give back for generations to come. Peonies come in bush form and a tree form. I enjoy the bush form best and they are available in single, semi-double and double flowers. They make a strong statement in the landscape and are great cutting plants. One tip for choosing the location for your new peony: Plant the peony in full sun and away from your foundation because the ants that benefit the peony will want to move in with you for the winter.



Double Pink Peony



Red Knock Out Rose



Raspberry Sunday Peony



Celebration Carefree Rose

# BEE HIVE UPDATE by Tim Vennefron and Jeff Dorton

Those of you who have been reading this news letter for at least the last couple of years may remember the story about the bee hive found in a tree at the nursery that was slated to be removed and the efforts by a few Berns employees to save that hive from destruction. We are happy to tell you that the story has a happy ending.

Recently Berns Nursery Manager Brad Schafer and Master Beekeeper Ralph Johnston gave our bees a new home. Brad cut the top of the stump, which had been home to the bees for over two years, to provide better access to the hive. With the stump on its side, Ralph started removing the honeycomb in search of the queen. The queen was not found, but they packed two sleeves of the chamber with brood honeycomb in hopes that the colony would survive. After nearly 2 weeks, Brad reports the hive appears to be flourishing. With the problems of the declining worldwide bee population, all those involved in the saving of this hive deserve a heart felt thank you from all of us.

More photos on page 4



Master Beekeeper Ralph Johnston ties a brood honeycomb to one of the new chambers.



Nursery Manager Brad Schafer smokes the bees in an attempt to calm the excitement about their new home.

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**APRIL/MAY.** Spring has sprung, the grass has ris, Berns is where the flower is! Ok, I admit it, I'm no poet, but the previous prose is true. Things are happening very quickly this year. It seems like all of the flowering trees and shrubs have exploded into bloom all at the same time, everyone who has seasonal allergies can attest to this. In an attempt to keep up with the pace of this season, here are the tasks for April and May.

First on our list is to finish March's tasks. I have been to a lot of homes already this year and in looking around these, other homes in the neighborhoods, and I admit, mine, a lot of use still have some cleanup to do. Removal of winter debris and early growing weeds is very important to having a successful season. Once your landscape beds are clean and looking crisp, apply a pre-emergent herbicide, (Preen), as well as a general purpose fertilizer. You can accomplish these 2 tasks in one step by using Preen-n-Green.

Next on the list is creating a crisp edge to all of your landscape beds. If you have access to a mechanical edger, this task won't take much time. If you don't, a straight edge spade or curved blade edging tool will do the trick, it will just take more time.

Once the pre-emergent herbicide and fertilizer are down and the edging is completed, it is time to apply your mulch. What ever type of mulch you have chosen for your landscape, even the dyed or "forever" mulches, it is important to maintain a 2" layer of mulch in your landscape beds. Mulch does many things besides giving your beds la finished look. Mulch helps control weed growth, prevents erosion, conserves moisture in your planting beds, and helps to maintain an even soil temperature. All of these items are extremely important for the health and vigor of your plants. Even if you plan on adding a few new plants to your landscape this spring, summer, or fall, apply the mulch to all areas now. You can rake it back from the area your are adding plants to when you are ready to add the new items.

Next, step back and admire the work you have accomplished. All great artists stop from time to time, to look at what they are working on and to admire their own creations. They are lying if they say the don't.

Now the real fun begins. Our next task is to PLANT, PLANT, PLANT. The Garden Center is busting at the seams with plant material. Trees, shrubs, ground cover, perennials, annuals, vegetables you name it and *Berns* has it. If you are planning a summer long splash of color with annuals, begin now by planning what and where you are going to plant. Even though the average date of the last frost for our area is around the 10th of May, you can begin planting your annuals during the later part of April, you just need to be prepared to protect them if the forecast calls for nightly lows dipping into the lower 30s.

*Check out our website*

**BernsLandscaping.com**

Another task on the list has to do with your lawn. Actually, it is a task that you will continue to do every 5 to 7 days this spring, this summer, and on into the fall. Mowing is a task that is sometimes a pain and sometimes a relaxing escape from the daily dilemmas of life. Ideally, you should mow your lawn often enough that you are only removing 1/3 of the leaf blade at a time. You should also set your mower at a 3" height to help eliminate weed competition.

While on the subject of your lawn, late April is the time to apply a weed and feed treatment to your turf areas. As with any chemical that you use in your landscape, always read and follow the label directions completely.

As the spring marches on towards summer, weeds will continue to invade your landscape beds and try to take over. Even with the application of a pre-emergent weed control, these scourges of the gardening world will find a way to get in and take root. There are a number of products available to help kill and control weeds in your landscape. Use these carefully as drift from them can kill or damage your plants. If you do not want to use a chemical and the invaders are few, hand pulling is an option. Doing this right after a soaking rain or irrigating the area will make them easier to pull. There is nothing more satisfying as grabbing one of these invaders by the throat and successfully pulling the entire root out of the ground, at least in the gardening world.

Finally, while we are still thinking about rain/irrigation, don't forget to give your landscape a good drink every so often. New plantings need the equivalence of 2 inches of rain a week. In a perfect world this would come as a 1/2 to 1" of slow soaking rain every 2 to 3 days. In reality, it may come as a downpour 1 day and then nothing for another week or more with 80 to 90 degree days in between. The old adage of slow and steady wins the race holds true with watering. A slow soaking with a hose or for multiple plants a soaker hose is the best way to water. Repeat this method of watering every 2 to 3 days depending on rainfall and the temperatures. Even if you planted in early spring and we've had ample rains this spring, you will need to water new plantings throughout the summer and fall.

COMING EVENTS

April 4          Easter          Berns Garden Center Closed

April 17        Festival of Blooms    Numerous activities all day at the Garden Center  
 Square foot gardening classes 10-12:00 and 2- 4:00  
 Meet the Landscape Design Team 11-2:00  
 Pet Mobile 11-3:00  
 Grilling with Barry 12-2:00

May 1            Kentucky Derby Run for the Roses  
 Learn about roses with Tim Wood at 1:00  
 Numerous other activities and giveaways all day long

May 29         Memorial Day Weekend

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BEE HIVE PHOTOS

by Tim Vennefron



Brad Schafer and Ralph Johnston prepare to remove the bees and honeycomb from the stump.



A close up view shows the intricate shapes as well as the amount of honey found in a wild hive.



The bees have found a new home!