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**Why Did They Quit Blooming?**

Your “New Gold” lantana, bougainvillea and hybrid tea roses may have stopped blooming.

A common gardening question right now goes something like this, “My “New Gold” lantana was blooming spectacularly and now, suddenly, there are no blooms! What would cause such a change?”

There are several potential causes.

Lantana are cyclical bloomers. The look great for 5or 6 weeks and then stop blooming for a similar period.

This “break” from blooming can usually be eliminated if you deadhead the lantanas halfway through the bloom period. Skim the lantana bloom area with your string mower. The action reduces the bloom intensity for a short time but seems to prevent the long break without any blooms.

Another cause of a “New Gold” lantana blooming pause is an attack of lacebugs. These small insects suck the juices from the underside of the foliage. The result is faded, dusty-looking leaves and a break in blooming. The plant will usually recover enough by late fall to have one more good flush of bloom before winter. For next year, mark your calendar so that a month before the symptoms showed up this year you can make applications of Spinosad or Sevin every two weeks.

A second question about blooms involves bougainvillea. Like lantana they have cycles of bloom and rest but there are some other unusual reasons that bougainvillea don’t bloom. Bougainvillea must be grown in full sun, they bloom best when they are root bound and they need to dry out between watering.

Quite often, gardener’s report that in response to poor bloom performance that they repot the bougainvillea and water it more. That won’t encourage more bloom. The plants delay blooming in order to grow more roots. Leave them in a 12-14 inch container for several years for good bloom performance. Keeping the plant moist has the same impact. Some gardeners let the bougainvillea wilt the night before they water the plant.

Bougainvillea do require fertilizer to bloom well. Use granular hibiscus food or osmocote.

Most roses take a break from blooming in mid-summer in response to the weather. On or about September 1, prune them lightly, fertilize with slow release lawn fertilizer, restore your insect and disease spray program and continue the irrigation. They will reward you with a flush of growth and several months of heavy bloom.