**Q’s & A’s**

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Q. Can you give us a short simple description how to prune our roses?

A. First remove all dead and injured stems. Second, identify three or four healthy stems that are spread around the plant and emerge from the base at about 60 degrees. Remove all the rest of the stems and reduce the remaining stems to about 30 inches tall. The remaining plant should have an open middle for good air movement and a sturdy framework to support the new growth and blooms.

Q. It is too late to aerate and top-dress the lawn?

A. No, golf courses do it all year. For most of us, March is ideal. Aeration and top-dressing is the best way to address compaction in the lawn and to bring organic material down into the root zone.

Q. Is there an organic control for fire ants?

A. One of the best is the product Concern that has Spinosad as an active ingredient.

Q. When will the soil be warm enough to plant tomatoes? What varieties do you recommend?

A. April 1 is the safest date but March 15 works most years. My favorite tomatoes are Tycoon, Tygress, 444, Solar Fire, Phoenix, Celebrity and BHN 968. BHN 968 is a superior cherry tomato that does not take over the garden. It is good for containers.

Q. What do we have to do to support the spring bloom period of our snapdragons, pansies and petunias?

A. To maximize the spring bloom performance of snapdragons, pansies, petunias, dianthus and other cool weather annuals, clear out the weeds and provide 1 cup of fertilizer (19-5-9) per 8 feet of row, and irrigate every week.

Q. What are the superior geraniums that you keep talking about in the radio show?

A. They are “Violet” and “Strawberry Sizzle” from the Fantasia series. They can tolerate more heat and cold than other geraniums.