

Roses, Weeds, and the Men's Garden Club of San Antonio

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It is time to prepare your roses for the fall bloom period. Take the opportunity to do a light pruning. Remove any dead stems and stems that are too tall or fill the middle of the plant. Fertilize with a cup of slow release lawn fertilizer such as 19-5-09 spread over the root area. If the plants are hybrid tea roses, resume your weekly insecticide and fungicide spray program. They also do best when they are irrigated each week. The tough modern roses and old-fashioned roses do not seem to need a regular spray program. A deep watering every three weeks will help them support a vigorous bloom.

This is also the time of the year to apply a preemergent herbicide if you want to reduce the winter weed crop in the lawn. Did you have bedstraw, henbit, dandelions, beggars' lice, thistle, rescue grass, or annual bluegrass. In some cases it is desirable to let the rescue grass and annual bluegrass grow and keep it mowed to produce a sustainable winter lawn, but products like Amaze, XL and Dimension will prevent most germination if the products are used according to the label instructions on or before September 1.

On another issue there are many of us who are proud of San Antonio's performance in water conservation, environmentally appropriate gardening, and youth gardening. The water conservation success has meant that we have over 300,000 more residents and a prosperous growing economy without using any more water than we did in 1980. The improved gardening skills mean we have unrestricted access to a fulfilling hobby that contributes to increased property values, excellent exercise opportunities, and better nutrition. Research conducted in San Antonio and other locations indicates that offering area youngsters gardening instruction and opportunities to use the new skills translates to their school success. Do you ever wonder how San Antonio was especially blessed with these desirable performances?

I believe it was a lucky combination of leadership that emerged as a team across several generations from elected officials, the horticulture industry, and civic minded citizens. It is no coincidence that it is the 50th anniversary of the Men's Garden Club of San Antonio (MGCSA). The organization was and continues to be a key contributor in providing the citizen leadership. There is a long list of contributions. Here are just a few. The MGCSA initiated the youth gardening program at the Botanical Center that has provided gardening space and instruction for over 7000 youngsters. And in fact, the MGCSA membership played an essential role in the development of the Botanical Garden, which has turned out to be a center of gardening and environmental education in San Antonio. The Men's Garden Club of San Antonio also worked closely with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to create and lead the Bexar County Master Gardeners. The MGCSA dominated BCMG hosted 2 International Master Gardener Conferences and celebrated many years of being the Chapter that recorded the most hours of volunteer service in Community Projects of all of the Worlds' MG Chapters.

Congratulations, members of the Men's Garden Club of San Antonio for your leadership over the last 50 years.

If you are not a member now but want to learn how you can become part of the Club's next 50 years, access the website at mensgardenclubofsa.com. An important note, despite the name, one half the

membership and leadership of the MGCSA is women. The reason the name stays the same is another interesting story!