

## April 2023 Gardener's Corner

By Cate White, SJ County Master Gardener

### Roses

Roses are a beautiful addition to any garden; worth the extra care they may require. They can be classified as garden or landscape types.

Garden types include Hybrid Teas, Grandifloras and Floribundas. The first two are the ones we think of as classic roses growing 3 to 5 feet tall and producing large showy flowers perfect for cutting. Hybrid teas are single stemmed, while Grandifloras have multiple blooms on each stem. Floribundas grow 2 to 4 feet tall and have multiple slightly smaller flowers per stem. These types generally require more care, including deadheading of spent flowers, careful pruning and frequent monitoring for insects and diseases.



Landscape or shrub and groundcover roses have been developed for general landscape use and tend to be hardier. They have fewer thorns, greater disease resistance, require less pruning and deadheading (since spent flowers will drop off), and can bloom throughout the year.

Additional varieties are climbers and miniatures, which are ideal for pots in small gardens.

All roses require strong light, and should be planted in full sun, although in our area some light afternoon shade can be desirable. They grow best where they are protected from strong winds. Garden types need plenty of air circulation and do not like to be crowded, while landscape types can be planted as hedges.

Roses need regular watering during the growing season. Here in Manteca with our sandy loam soil, this means frequent light to moderate watering. While drip irrigation is adequate, Garden types appreciate occasional deep soaking. A strong spray of water from time to time will discourage aphids and spider mites. Do this in the early morning, allowing leaves plenty of time to dry before nightfall. Using a well-balanced slow-release fertilizer at the beginning of the growing season or making several light fertilizer applications from March through September will keep your roses thriving.





***Hoplia Beetle* UCRAN Photo**

Common problems include insects such as aphids and spider mites and fungal diseases like mildew, rust and black spot. Neem oil spray is a good choice to combat all these problems, although it may require several applications. This should be done during cooler parts of the day when the plants are not in direct sunlight to avoid foliage injury. Broad spectrum and systemic pesticides are not recommended, since they are harmful to beneficial insects including bees.

Another insect pest occurring this time of year is the hoplia beetle. These slow-moving brown beetles are about a quarter of an inch long. They emerge from the ground in surrounding fields each spring and fly to our gardens to feed on flowers and to mate. They are attracted to light colored flowers on roses, irises and lilies, where they congregate in numbers, chewing holes in both flowers and buds. Unfortunately, pesticides don't affect them. The best method of control is hand picking, either by shaking them directly into a pail of soapy water or removing and discarding affected blossoms. You can also try placing light-colored buckets filled with soapy water near affected plants attracting the beetles and drowning them. Fortunately, the hoplia's adult life span is short and after 4 to 6 weeks they fly off, lay their eggs, and die. There is only one generation a year.



## April Garden Checklist

- Start planting frost sensitive plants now, including citrus, tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and basil.
- Control aphids by spraying plants with a strong stream of water or applying insecticidal soaps or oils. Monitor citrus for Asian Citrus Psyllid.
- Fertilize citrus, deciduous fruit trees and flowering shrubs with a slow release fertilizer if not done in March.
- Adjust irrigation according to the weather and be sure plants are properly mulched.
- Prune winter flowering shrubs like viburnums and camellias.
- Keep up with weeds by pulling or cultivating.

**Warning for Cat Owners:** Lilies are highly toxic to cats. This includes Easter Lilies, Asiatic Lilies, Star-gazer Lilies, Day Lilies and more. All parts of the plant are toxic, causing kidney failure. Even licking lily pollen that has rubbed onto their fur or drinking water from a vase containing lilies can be fatal for cats. Cat owners should avoid bringing Easter Lilies into their homes. If you think your cat has come into contact with a lily plant, seek immediate veterinary care.