

## Plant of the Month

### EarthKind Roses Belinda's Dream

(Rosax 'Belinda's Dream' )

Earth-Kind Rose is a special distinction given to only select roses that have been extensively tested and proven to have superior pest tolerance and an unsurpassed landscape performance.

I would like to introduce you to my favorite Earth-Kind Rose, Belinda's Dream. Belinda's Dream was one of the first roses to be designated as an Earth-Kind Rose and it has not disappointed. This rose will tolerate pests, a variety of soil types, as well as some disease. In the landscape it thrives as a specimen shrub or as a mass planting like a hedge. Belinda's large lush pink blooms give any landscape or garden a pop of color and the blooms sweet aroma are almost reminiscent of antique roses from generations past.

by: Patrick Dickinson



**Sharp and clean tools help to keep healthy and disease free plants.**

Annual pruning of perennials and deciduous shrubs is an age old practice that removes unsightly old growth and encourages new healthy plant growth. However, many gardeners are intimidated by this process. This is a prime time to prune because most perennials and deciduous plants store all of their energy in their roots during the dormant season so pruning the stems causes minimal to no stress on the plant.

Annual pruning is not only essential to the health and performance of most perennials, but it is also error proof if you follow a few simple guidelines.

#### Proper Safety Equipment & Safety Gear

- Sharp hand pruners or loppers, gloves, and safety glasses.

#### Best Time to Prune

Timing is of the essence when pruning perennials and woody shrubs.

- Prune late fall and early spring before the plants have started flushing out.
- Herbaceous perennials, like Oxalis and Ruellia, go completely dormant which leaves the entire upper portion of the plant dead. These need to be cut down within a few inches of the soil.
- Roses should have no more than one third removed from the plant in a single pruning.

Following these simple steps will help keep your landscape clean and full of healthy new growth!



**Perennial grasses and woody perennials, like Salvia Greggii, should be pruned down to 6-12 inches of the soil.**

## Irrigation Essentials

#### Save Water Save Money with Drip Irrigation

Drip irrigation is the most efficient method for irrigation with efficiency of up to 90 %. Drip irrigation applies water very slowly under low pressure at a rate of about 0.6 to 1 gallon per hour. Drip tubing applies water either on the soil surface in planted beds or under the soil in the root zone in lawns. The good news is many existing irrigation systems can be converted to drip irrigation.

#### Drip Conversion/Installation

You can install drip irrigation by:

- Using the existing pipes, valves and controller and installing a conversion or retrofit kit.
- Simply attaching to the outdoor faucet.

Check manufacturers' websites for conversion & retrofit kits along with tutorials about drip irrigation. If you think the job is to big, hiring a Licensed Irrigator to convert your sys-



tem is always an option. Drip irrigation works most efficiently in conjunction with about 2 to 4 inches of mulch covering tubing and the root zone.

**During drought restriction drip irrigation may be exempt from water restrictions.**



## 2013 Upcoming Courses

Water Educator/Extension Agent  
Irrigation Training  
February 26-28, 2013  
9 am – 4 pm daily

Lawn Care Maintenance  
March 5, 2013  
6 pm—8 pm

Vegetable Gardening—Spring  
March 14, 2013  
10 am—12 pm

Register at <http://dallas.tamu.edu/courses/>

## New at the Center

### Save the Date!!!

### WaterSense House opens on March 23, 2013

Texas A&M AgriLife Research Dallas, Urban Water Team has joined forces with EPA to transform an existing home on our campus to the first EPA WaterSense Home in the DFW - Metroplex. Some of the transformations are:

- Installation of a new On Demand Hot Water System.
- Retrofit of all faucet and fixtures inside the home.
- Installation of a new Water Efficient Landscape
- Installation of a Rainwater Harvesting System and Rain Garden for conservation and storm-water management.

- In home upgrades using renewable and energy efficient products for the flooring, counter tops lighting and appliances.

We are also partnering with Dallas Water Utilities by hosting one of their Spring Landscape Seminars featuring Landscape Designer and Author Bonnie Reese. Watch for more information on this event in the March E-News.



## Resources

### EARTHKIND

Encourages:

- Landscape Water conservation
- Reduction of fertilizer and pesticide use
- Landscaping for energy conservation
- Reduction of landscape wastes entering landfills

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/>

[https://agriflifebookstore.org/publications\\_browse.cfm](https://agriflifebookstore.org/publications_browse.cfm)

## Who We Are

*The Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Dallas is a gateway to science, researchers and Extension educators across the U.S. The Center serves all of urban Texas, and the Dallas-Arlington-Fort Worth metropolitan area in particular.*

**We're on the web!!**

<http://dallas.tamu.edu/>

## Landscape Essentials

### Spring Mulching

One of the best methods of growing healthy plants and conserving water at the same time is to use mulch in the landscape.

Spring is a great time to check the garden for thinning mulch. Since organic mulches decompose over time, they will need to be replenished or replaced periodically. No need to remove the old, It is working to improve your soil. Just add a 2-4 inch layer of mulch over the existing thinning area.

### Advantages of Mulching

- Reduces Soil Moisture loss through evaporation.
- Reduces the soil's exposure to wind.
- Insulates the soil keeping it cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.
- Reduces rain splash and runoff.

- Helps suppress the growth of many weeds.
- Organic Mulches enrich the soil as they decay, providing nutrients for the soil and improves its texture.

### Types of Mulch

#### Organics

- Bark
- Chipper debris
- Partially Decomposed compost
- Leaves
- Pine Needles
- Pecan Shells

#### Inorganics

- River stones
- Pebbles
- Gravel chips

Using Landscape Fabric is another option used in conjunction with mulch to allow air and water to pass through, while reducing weeds and evaporation.