



Rainbow Gazette

VOL. 9, NO. 2

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE RAINBOW GARDEN CLUB • SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

FEBRUARY, 2004

Antique roses on the agenda for February

Let's face it. Most of us have given up on roses as a major focal point of our perennial gardens. They require countless hours pruning, fertilizing and spraying just to keep them blooming. And then they die.

If this has been your experience, then the garden club's February foray to the Antique Rose Emporium will be nothing short of an epiphany.

Brace yourself. What you will see are gardens brimming with some of the most beautiful roses on the market today. All of them are old roses, as hardy as they are prolific.

Antique Rose Emporium owner Michael Shoup, along with other antique rose enthusiasts such as The Texas Rose Rustlers, have spent years haunting abandoned homes and cemeteries throughout Texas, searching for the old, hearty rose varieties that populated home gar-

dens before the Civil War, when the first modern roses were introduced. The result is a cornucopia of ground covers, climbers, hedges and bush varieties that will bloom through the hottest summers and the coldest winters, requiring little more than the occasional watering.

"Our goal has been to give credibility to these plants," says Shoup, "and we find ourselves part of a recent upsurge of interest in antique roses. We know from personal experience and from letters and comments of many repeat customers that there is no way one can begin to appreciate the versatility of these roses until after a few seasons of working with them.

Nothing we say will substitute for the benefits of hands-on experience.

"But we hope to answer

enough questions and generate enough enthusiasm to launch you into the world of old roses with confidence. Be aware, however, that these are captivating plants, and once taken with them you're never likely to be the

same."

Come explore the world of antique roses with us Feb. 21 at the Antique Rose Emporium. Details are on page 3, and page 4 and 5 contain a rose guide you should take with you.



Volunteers bring a rainbow of color to Alpha Home

Rainbow Garden Club Members have now accumulated 20 planters to add color to the "asphalt jungle" that surrounded the Alpha Home 2. They are planted with small perennials such as firecracker bush, Mexican bush sage, and shrimp plant, surrounded by winter color such as pansies, Swiss chard, and lobelia. The ladies (diligently instructed by Maren) have been good about watering with a Hasta Gro solution

and I stop by weekly to deadhead and ensure they are surviving. If any of you are tossing underused or cracked pots that could add to our collection or are dividing perennials or finding "extra" annuals after your own home projects, please keep them in mind to add to our landscape project.

The Alpha Home 1 has taken care of itself with its new beds of grasses, canas, lush red Sage, jewels of Opar, Katie ruellia, and even a Key lime to attract butterflies. Those ladies are envious of the color tubs from the other location and are encouraging us to add some to their outdoor meeting area (presently lacking color). So any additions are

CONTINUED PAGE 2

THREE RECIPIES REQUESTED AT DECEMBER'S MEETING

Bill McKinzey's Banana Pudding



1 large box Vanilla Wafers
5 or 6 ripe bananas. Peel, slice, sprinkle with lemon juice and toss lightly so they won't oxidize and change color.

1 cup chopped pecans. Reserve.
1 1/2 cups cold milk
1 (3 oz.) package vanilla instant pudding

1 can Eagle brand condensed milk

Combine milk, condensed milk and pudding and mix well.

Refrigerate 10 minutes or more. Add:

8 oz. sour cream
8 oz. Cool Whip
Mix well.

Line a large pan or dish with Vanilla Wafers. Fill the dish with alternating levels of bananas, pudding, and wafers. Top with chopped pecans and refrigerate until ready to serve. Serves 8 to 10.

Original recipe from "Lone Star Cooking," published by the 45th National Square Dance Convention in San Antonio, 1996.

VOLUNTEERS: from page 1

welcome. Donations of funds would also be gladly accepted to enhance their surroundings.

SAAF House at 818 Grayson will be in need of Perennial trimming after the Freezes are over. (Late February we hope) If you have a spare afternoon on Tues or Friday let Smitty know to co-ordinate the work) We also have many perennials donated by Rainbow Gardens (1000 Oaks) to plant. The Bananas (donated by Mike and Gary) have survived and are in need of pruning along with Yellow Bells, Mexican Bush Sage and other overgrown perennials. A Saturday workday in late February will be in order: if interested in any of these projects



call or e-mail Smitty at SiroSmitty@GBRONline.com or 698-9767.



Billy Jack's Sweet Potato Casserole

Ingredients:

1 can (16 oz. or more) sweet potatoes, heated in packing syrup... then drained.

1 1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 can (large) evaporated milk
3/4 stick butter or margarine
2 eggs, beaten

Directions:

Mash potatoes. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour into a large casserole dish. Bake in 400-degree oven for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and add topping (topping recipe

below) and bake 15 minutes longer, or until the topping browns.

Topping:

1 cup crushed corn flakes
3/4 stick margarine (not butter), melted

1/2 cup shredded coconut

1/2 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup pecans, chopped

(Tip: if using fresh sweet potatoes, use the equivalent of 16 ounces after cooking and draining.)



Corn Casserole

Ingredients:

1 can (16 1/2 ounce) whole kernel corn, drained

1 can (16 1/2 ounce) cream style corn

1 box (8 1/2 ounce) Jiffy Cornbread Mix

2 eggs slightly beaten

1/2 stick melted margarine
1 cup sour cream

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together, adding sour cream last. Pour into a greased casserole dish and bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

Rainbow Gazette

The Rainbow Gazette is published monthly for members of the Rainbow Garden Club of San Antonio

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IN THE COMMUNITY

**Rainbow Garden Club
Climbing President Jimmy
Contreras' Estate Sale**

Feb. 7-Feb. 9

his residence 915 Ripley (Woodlawn & Summit) 8:00-? All items will be sold: Furniture, Artwork, Garden tools & Decor, Books, Potted Plants? Call Ken or Smitty for other details if needed 210 698-9767.

**Madison Elementary School
Plant Sale**

(Teacher Paul Gates founding member of RGC.)

Saturday March 6 9-12:30

2900 W. Woodlawn (Woodlawn & St. Cloud) near Bandera

Come early for best choices of Greenhouse plants, propagations

of old Pass Along Plants etc. Hanging baskets, Cacti planters, houseplants, spring bedding plants and more. 10th year of a very successful traditional sale. Good Prices and interesting unusual plants for those who arrive early. Call Smitty or Ken for further information. 210 698-9767

"Sizzle 'n Hollywood"**Alamo City Men's Chorale**

Evening of fun, food, entertainment and silent auction premieres at The Bright Shawl McCullough & Augusta Street on March 27, 2004 6:30-10:00 p.m. For further information call Russell Wright 367-2587 or Jay Pantusa 695-2970.

**Master Gardeners at
SA Stock Show & Rodeo**

Freeman Coliseum

February 6-22

Visit the Master Gardener's "Texas Trail Tent"... explore gardening themes for San Antonio.

Some rules to live by

#1. It was great to see such a turnout for the January meeting (approximately 70 attended. However, on the chance that we may have similar turnouts in the future, we need to reiterate the obligation of members to RSVP to hosts, especially if they are bringing guests. Roxanne and Mary Lou managed it very well, and fortunately we had enough food for everybody, but we can imagine that it was daunting for a first-time host to be invaded by such a crowd.

#2. It's time to also reiterate the "Luis Torres rule" for contributions to the potluck, i.e. "look at whatever it is you're bringing, and bring the necessary serving utensils for your contribution."

UPCOMING TRIPS: from page 3

tropical plants, exotic fish, rare butterflies and birds. Explore the mysteries of science at the Discovery Pyramid, and take a rocking and rolling ride through the universe at the Ridefilm Theater. See spectacular images leap from the screen of our six-story IMAX 3D Theater and visit beautiful Palm Beach.

**Saturday, September 27:
Bamberger Ranch**

Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve is a 5,500 acre ranch that has been described as the largest habitat restoration project on private land in Texas. On the ranch tour you may discover dinosaur tracks, hunt for Cretaceous fossils, see the Chiroptorium, a man-made cave built to house 1 million bats, and visit the largest herd of the endangered Scimitar-horned Oryx in the world.

Selah has hiking trails, a Nature Trail with interpretive signs identifying native plants and Madrone Lake where people can swim, fish or enjoy looking into the clear water. You can learn about the environment, while pausing to reflect on the

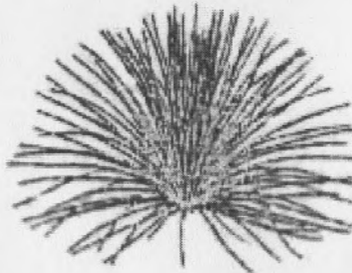
beauty and serenity of Hill Country nature.

The ranch has as its goals to maintain Selah in a natural state of grasslands and wooded canyons, which provide healthy habitat for native and endangered species, as well as domestic plants and animals, and to protect it from development. To demonstrate through a working example of grass-based agriculture the practices of good

conservation and their value to the entire ecosystem. To educate visitors by providing facilities and programs which enhance the visitors' experience and encourage appreciation and awareness of Selah's and their own natural and cultural heritage. To provide a place where visitors of all ages can experience the beauty of nature, learn the importance of good conservation and land stewardship, and

leave with a sense of power that the individual can positively impact his or her environment.

To manage the ranch resources and facilities in such a way that agriculture, education, recreation, and "People Ranching" will come as close as possible to meeting Selah's costs of operation while preserving it for future generations of people, plants and animals.



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Is It Time to Renew Your Membership?

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P.O. BOX 15292
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78212

NAME(S): _____

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(3) COMPLIMENTARY ISSUES: _____

NEW MEMBER: (\$10.00 DUES ARE ENCLOSED)

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MEETING NOTES

January meeting A great success

Thanks to all the members and guests who made our January 2004 meeting a success. We enjoyed the lovely home and hospitality of Mary Lou and Roxanne. Our thanks. President Alex B. gave an outstanding calendar for the coming events of 2004. Rainbow Garden Club members will have many opportunities to increase their knowledge of gardening.

Join us for these
exciting trips

March 13 & 14

Houston/Galveston
weekend:

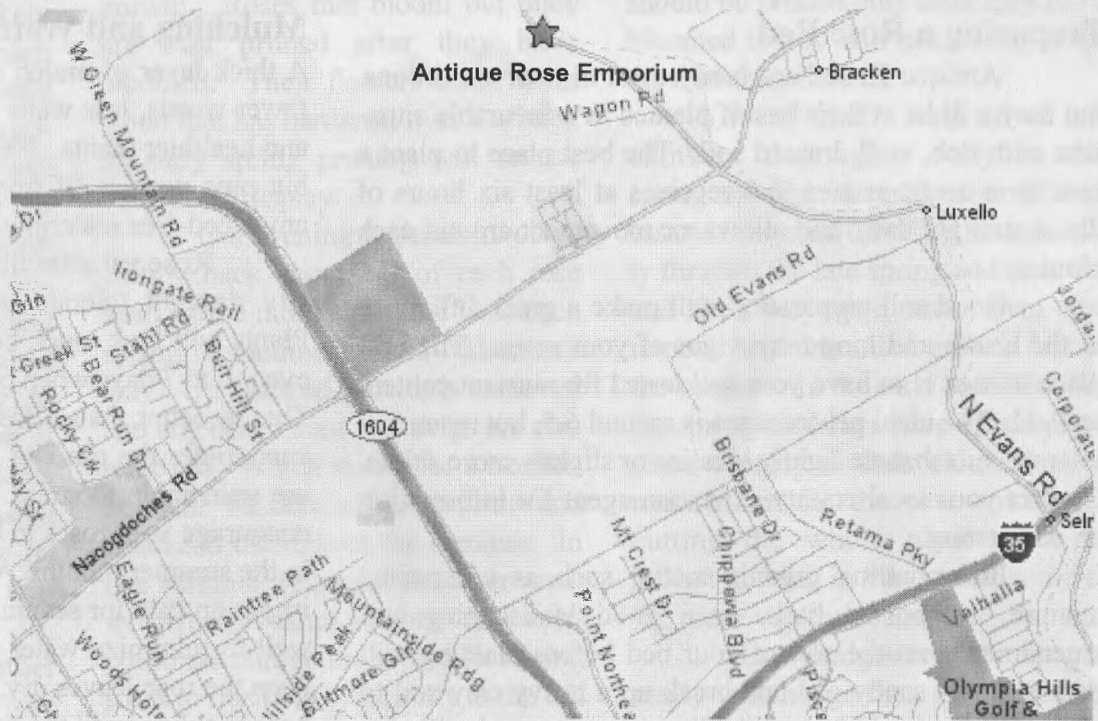
We begin with a drive to Houston on Saturday morning for a tour of the Azalea Trail through the exclusive River Oaks neighborhood, then travel to the Galveston area for the night. Sunday morning we tour the Moody Gardens on Galveston Island and return to San Antonio Sunday afternoon.

The Azalea Trail: The name given to the various spectacular flowering shrubs (genus Rhododendron) of the Heath family that are in full bloom each Spring in Houston. These showy flowers flourish at six Houston locations in varying shades of pink, purple, white, red and yellow and are a magnificent sight to behold.

Moody Gardens: Water our imagination and travel the oceans of the world at The Aquarium at Moody Gardens. Step into the Rainforest Pyramid with thousands of

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FEBRUARY'S MEETING



Pot Luck Brunch

11 a.m. Saturday, February 21, 2004

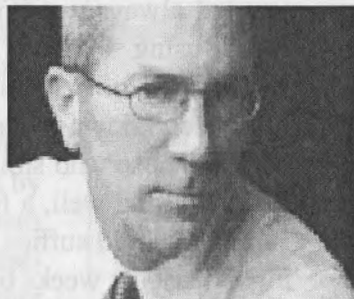
Antique Rose Emporium

7561 E. Evans Rd.

Topic: Antique Roses

Directions: Located outside loop 1604, take the Nacogdoches Exit off 1604 and go outside the loop (Rolling Oaks Mall). Go to E. Evans Road..(I believe there is a sign for Garden-Ville and Antique Rose Emporium). Turn left onto E. Evans and follow signs to Garden-Ville and Antique Rose Emporium.. (Same Entrance off of Evans Rd.) Once you enter there, follow signs to Antique Rose Emporium (fork to the right).

Please RSVP to Smitty and Ken at 698-9767 by Friday, February 20th.
(Antique Rose Emporium requested a count of the expected attendance.)



Randy Rice, Realtor

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GROUP



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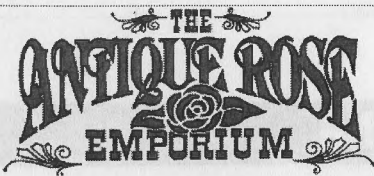
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ANTIQUE ROSE GUIDE

Preparing a Rose Bed

'Antique Roses' are hardy even in poor conditions, but they will be at their best if planted in a favorable situation with rich, well drained soil. The best place to plant a rose is in an open area that receives at least six hours of direct sunlight daily and allows air movement around each plant.

Good soil preparation will make a great difference in the health and long-term vigor of your roses. The best place to start is to have your soil tested for nutrient content and pH. The ideal pH for roses is around 6.5, but roses will tolerate soils that are lightly alkaline or slightly more acidic. Contact your local county extension agent for information on soil testing.

Incorporating organic matter such as composted manure, composted bark, or a good landscaping soil amendment into the soil of your bed before planting will both enrich a sandy soil and break up a heavy clay soil to allow for proper drainage. Adding a coarse sand will also help to loosen heavy soils. As the organic matter continues to decompose, it will add nutrients to the soil, help promote the activity of beneficial soil micro-organisms, and will help neutralize soil pH. (We don't recommend using peat moss, peat based soil amendments, or large volumes of mushroom compost because they have not given satisfactory results.)

Planting the Roses

Dig the hole large enough to accommodate the root ball. The plant should be set approximately the same level at which it was growing in its pot, or slightly deeper. Add enough soil to cover the roots, then firm well and water thoroughly to remove air pockets and to settle the soil firmly around the root system. Fill the rest of the hole with soil and mound it slightly around the base of the plant for stability while settling.

Potted roses can also be transplanted into large containers and grown indefinitely in this manner until you choose a permanent location. Remember to use a high quality potting soil when transplanting from one pot to another. Roses grown in containers require water and fertilizer more frequently than those planted in the ground and have the same sunlight requirement of at least six hours.

Mulching and Watering

A thick layer of mulch applied 1 or 2 times a year means fewer weeds, less water stress, less heat stress, richer and healthier plants. We use hardwood mulch on our beds, but pine needles (if from your own trees), leaf mulch, or any weed-free material will do the job.

Rose varieties that have survived for years are usually drought tolerant once established (about 2 years). Plants will look much better if given a good deep soaking every 5 to 7 days when conditions are dry, including winter. This is better than a frequent light sprinkling which only encourages the roots to grow near the surface where they are vulnerable to stress and damage. Deep watering will encourage your roses to hold their foliage and bloom better in the summer months. A soaker hose or some form of drip irrigation (run for several hours at a time) works especially well to minimize water waste through evaporation and to keep the rose leaves dry, or you can just leave your garden hose trickling until the ground is saturated (several hours or even overnight).

Feeding

We have found that most commercial rose food and organic fertilizers are fine and give good results if directions are followed carefully and you have your soil tested annually to determine its specific needs.

The important thing about any fertilizer application is that it should be watered in thoroughly after application; both to dissolve the fertilizer into a form the rose can use and to clean any residue off of surrounding foliage. Chemical fertilizers can burn or even kill a plant if over-used or improperly applied. Read the label and when in doubt about how much to apply, remember that less is better, and always water well afterward. (We do not recommend using fertilizers that contain herbicides, systemic insecticides, or systemic fungicides because some products have been known to damage or kill plants).

Those who simply want to keep their roses healthy and blooming well, a feeding in spring and another in late summer should suffice. It is also advisable to stop fertilizing at least six weeks before your first frost date. This will help your plants slow their growth in order to go dormant for winter and avoid freeze damage.

Disease and Insects

If your old roses seem to be badly affected by blackspot or powdery mildew, they are most likely planted in the wrong spot: too much shade, too little air circulation, poorly drained soil, etc etc. An old rose properly situated should give years of basically trouble-free beauty. This is not to say that the 'Antique Roses' never get blackspot or mildew. They are disease resistant, but rarely completely disease free. They will generally shed any infected leaves, continuing to grow and bloom with healthy vigor. If you choose to spray in order to keep the foliage perfect. We suggest using a mild, broad-spectrum fungicide on an "as needed" basis rather than a regular preventative program.

Aphids, thrips, and other insect pests rarely affect a healthy rose severely, but they can disfigure and mangle the tender new growth, buds, and flowers. We suggest using insecticidal soap.

We suggest using strong chemical insecticides only in the case of very severe infestations that might result in the loss of the plant.

Pruning

'Antique Roses' don't require the stringent and careful pruning that is needed by many modern sorts. A good rule of thumb is to clip back no more than 1/3 of the bush, encouraging full foliage and heavy bloom without destroying the vigor and natural attractive form of the plant.

When a rose bush, like any other shrub, is cut back, it responds by putting on a spurt of growth. This tender new growth can get frost or heat-burned, so avoid heavy midsummer and late fall pruning, or pruning too early in the spring. 2 to 3 weeks before the final frost date is ideal for spring pruning.

Everblooming varieties can be lightly trimmed or 'tip-pruned' several times a year, as they flower on new growth. Roses that bloom but once are best pruned after they have bloomed. Their flowers come from wood that has hardened over a winter, so early spring pruning will reduce their floral display.

Our pruning regimen involves cutting back about 1/3 of each rose bush (some more and some less) each spring, sometime around Valentine's Day. Unbalanced growth is removed and any dead canes and twigs are also removed. Which makes for a healthier plant. We continue to tip prune and deadhead throughout the summer. In late summer, (September in our area) we give the bushes a light overall haircut to encourage the repeat-flowering roses to flush out beautifully in the fall and to give the spring-bloomers a tidier shape.

Climbing roses really need only to have any dead or unwanted canes removed and to have their canes trained. Sometimes it is advantageous to remove old canes thoroughly in order to make room for newer, more productive ones. If a climber is getting too big and busy it is best to thin it out in early spring so that you can

see what you are doing while its foliage is not a bother. Spring-blooming climbers, on the other hand, should be pruned only after they have bloomed or you will risk losing all or most of their blooms.

We normally train all of our climbers thoroughly early in the spring and thin repeat bloomers if necessary. They are tidied up occasionally through the late spring and summer and then we again train them and remove any unwanted growth late in the summer. In the early summer after the spring-bloomers have finished, we remove many of their older canes to make room for the new, sometimes cutting the whole plant down to almost nothing in the case of some of the more vigorous ramblers.

Rose hedges can be shaped easily with hedge shears, and roses in a natural or wild setting can be left completely alone unless a hard winter produces some unsightly dead canes. If left unpruned, many varieties of old roses will produce attractive hips to brighten the winter garden.

Retail Center Guarantee

We have taken many measures to ensure that the selections of roses you have made are healthy and vigorous.

Please understand that once a plant leaves our care we cannot continue to guarantee it. Of course, you would not expect us to replace plants lost due to freezing, bad drainage, drought, heat, carelessness, neglect or lack of experience on the part of the planter.

Kindly notify us of any problems with your roses within one month of purchase and on your next visit to the retail center return the 'white name tag' for a replacement or substitute.

We will continue to replace any mislabeled roses upon notification.



San Antonio has a real wide swing of temperature and weather conditions in the winters. With a number of early freezes before Thanksgiving it seemed destined that we would have a very cold winter, but that has not been the case. At this time I have Zinnias that came up from seeds that fell to the ground before I removed last summer's plants, and they are blooming. It is warm right now as I write this, but just wait.

You might want to check out plant protection materials such as Grow-Web, Plant Guard and Plant Shield now, to increase your options should the weather turn suddenly frigid.

February in the Garden

VEGETABLES:

- It is time to plant your spring crop of cool weather, frost-tolerant veggies. You can choose from broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, radishes, onions, spinach, carrots, English peas, potatoes, parsley, turnips, asparagus (crowns), beets, swiss chard, collards, kohlrabi and cauliflower (transplants).

LAWN:

- Apply pre-emergent herbicide this month to prevent crab grass, sand burs and other summer weeds.
- Control winter weeds by removing them entirely by hand or with a weeding tool.

SHADE TREES:

- February is a good month to finish planting shade trees. Dig the hole as deep as the container and 2-3 times as wide. Fill with the native soil removed then cover the soil over the roots with 3 inches of mulch, making sure to not get the mulch up to the trunk of the tree.
- Use live oak tree leaves for mulch or in the compost pile. Hurry and do any necessary pruning to shade trees, except oaks. Wait

until after June 1st to prune oaks.

FRUIT & PECANS:

- February is the best month to prune fruit trees. Obtain instructional pruning diagram from the Bexar County Master Gardeners Office at 3355 Cherry Ridge, Suite 208, or check at their website, bexar-tx.tamu.edu.
- Apply dormant oil to fruit tree trunks and branches to kill scale. Dormant oil will also kill phylloxera and other wintering insects on pecans.

COLOR:

- This winter has been so mild that roses and other blooming shrubs have not been "cold hardened". Watch weather reports to protect those shrubs from any sudden, severe cold.
- Watch for caterpillars on Texas mountain laurel and bluebonnets. Use BT as soon as any damage appears.
- Enjoy Pansies, snapdragons, dianthus, and stocks blooming their brightest this month.
- Plant petunias to fill empty areas in the garden.
- Larkspur transplants, planted early this month, will be blooming by Easter.
- Do not cut daffodils until the leaves are

The leaves are producing food for next year's bloom. It does not matter with tulips. In San Antonio they only bloom once.

- Prune your roses after Valentine's Day. Fertilize with rose food, replenish the mulch and begin your weekly insecticide and fungicide sprays. Or none for organic gardeners. Attend our meeting on Roses on February 21, 2004 for timely information.

BIRDS:

- February is one of the busiest bird feeding months. Look for goldfinches starting to get color.
- Park cars away from ligustrums and their berries. Cedar Waxwings enjoying ligustrum berries make quite a mess!
- Purple martin scouts will arrive early in the month. Get the Martin birdhouses up!

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