

**“What’s In A Name...  
that which we call a rose  
by any other name would smell as sweet.”**

Everyone has a link to roses, from Shakespeare in “Romeo and Juliet” to Gertrude Stein who killed the conversation with ‘a rose is a rose is a rose,’ to each of us admiring the buds opening this week. After centuries of rose breeding it is understandable that there is difficulty finding new names for this beloved flower. But if our generation has had to overreach in the name department, we have been most fortunate that we now have roses for all garden purposes.

Traditionally used in formal ‘rose’ gardens, roses, especially floribundas, are currently found in mixed borders and perennial beds and antique shrub roses are seen as stand-alone specimens or in shrub borders. New ground cover roses include ‘Beach Blanket’ (rose), ‘Blossom Blanket’ (white), and ‘Happy Chappy’ (apricot). These would be useful in tying a terrace or low deck to the ground.

Nothing is more elegant than a hedge of roses. The thorns may slow down unwanted critters and their season of color is long. The drawback of course is their leafless winter dormancy. If you really wish to block a view or preserve privacy, plant your rose hedge against a background of dependable evergreen yew (*Taxus*). No plant has that deep rich green and fine texture that contrasts so perfectly with roses. I don’t understand why yew is not fashionable at the moment.

Because it does so well without attention and is thus prized in churchyards perhaps it has a reputation for sadness? Walter de la Mare (b.1873) captured that sentiment when he wrote “Of all the trees in England, Oak, Elder, Elm, and Thorn, the Yew alone burns lamps of peace for them that lie forlorn.” Historically yew was the wood of choice for those famous English long bows.

*Taxus* will tolerate acid and alkaline soil, sun and shade: cultivars can be found that are tall and narrow or shorter and bushier. Although not hedge material, there are yews adaptable as ground covers.

Jackson & Perkins feature the “Simplicity” series of roses for use as 4 to 5 feet hedges. They are bushy and dense and flower generously spring through fall. The original one, quite properly, was a rose rose, followed by white and yellow ‘Simplicities’. This trio is now joined by a lovely lavender-pink color with a lemony fragrance. All are so carefree they ask to be used in landscaping.

### **Help yourself and your community...**

Inspired by this month’s celebration of Earth Day perhaps you have considered the ways you can do your part in caring for our natural world. Looking around our Tidewater area we know how fortunate we are to live in this relatively unspoiled place

and we want to do everything we can to keep it that way. One way to help protect this beautiful environment is to become a Master Gardener.

With the current budgetary travails in the state, the Virginia Cooperative Extension will rely increasingly on the Master Gardeners to assist and educate their neighbors and community in general gardening practices as well as in the proper use of pesticides and fertilizers. Become a part of that volunteer effort by training as a Master Gardener.

There is a class beginning September 7, 2010 and ending November 18, 2010. Fifty hours of instruction are provided by Tuesday and Thursday classes held from 9 AM to 12 Noon at Northside Christian Church, 1213 George Washington Memorial Highway, York County.

The course fee of \$85 includes all that expert instruction as well as a manual of over 600 pages that covers a universe of horticulture. You will learn not just basic botany, insects, and diseases, but also pruning, propagation, soils, lawns, and plants from trees to posies. Call an extension office in your area for more information. Hampton (757) 727-1401; Newport News (757) 591-4838; York County (757) 890-4940; Gloucester (804) 693-2602.

To download an application, access: <http://www.yorkcounty.gov.vce> Clip & save this information so you can join the class before the application deadline May 28, 2010.

York County is a central point for the location of the class but upon completion you can join any one of the many Master Gardener groups in our area. Joining the Master Gardeners is a commitment in which you will receive far more than you give. Did I mention how much fun it is?