Friday’s Feature

By

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2008 All-America Rose Selections winners

With Valentine’s Day just around the corner, gardeners’ thoughts turn to roses. If you are thinking about adding a rose to your landscape, you may want to consider one of the All-America Rose Selections. AARS winners for 2008 are Mardi Gras and Dream Come True.

The All-America Rose Selections is a non-profit association of rose growers and introducers dedicated to the introduction and promotion of exceptional roses. Since 1938 the AARS seal of approval has graced outstanding new rose varieties that have withstood the test of time.

According to LSU AgCenter horticulture professor Dr. Allen Owings, Dream Come True is a stunning sight of catchy colors, which lures the likes of even non-rose lovers to its side. This rose produces flawlessly formed yellow blossoms, blushed with ruby-red at the tips, all set amongst abundant matte-green foliage. The big, bushy vigorous plant yields long-stemmed, long-lived blooms with a mild tea fragrance, making it lovely in the landscape and a great choice for bouquets.

Dream Come True was hybridized by Dr. John Pottschmidt of Cincinnati, Ohio and introduced by Weeks Roses of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. Dr. Pottschmidt is only the third amateur hybridizer to win the AARS Award in 67 years.

Dr. Owings says Mardi Gras creates a festive atmosphere in any setting with its flamboyant blooms in a novel blend of pink, orange and yellow. It has a delightful peppery scent. Each high-centered hybrid tea-style bloom begins as an apricot-orange bud that slowly spirals open to reveal a 4-inch bright pink and orange bloom with a yellow base.

Mardi Gras has proven to perform exceptionally well across the country with little-to-no care. The colorful blooms are perfectly framed with dark green, semi-glossy foliage, and its upright columnar habit makes it an ideal rose to use as a hedge or in a border with mixed perennials.

Mardi Gras was hybridized by Keith Zary and is introduced by Jackson & Perkins Wholesale, Inc., Medford, Ore.

Plant roses where they will get direct sunlight for at least six hours during the day. Where some shading is unavoidable, locations which supply morning sunlight are preferred.
The best soil for roses is one that has good drainage yet holds an adequate supply of moisture and nutrients. Nutrients are most readily available to roses in a moderate to slightly acid soil or a pH of 5.5 to 6.5. Roses should not be planted in poorly drained bog or marsh areas.

Materials that will increase the water holding capacity, improve the nutrient balance and improve the pH can be added to the soil before planting. Organic materials to amend poor soils include compost, leaf-mold and well rotted manures. As much as a four inch layer of any of these or a combination of two or more will improve most soils. Mix amendments thoroughly and evenly to a depth of twelve inches.

Dormant bare-rooted plants will typically be in bloom about ten weeks after planting. Planting in northern Florida is typically recommended in January to allow roots systems to become established before shoots begin to grow.

For more information on Dream Come True and Mardi Gras, visit the AARS website at http://www.rose.org or call your local UF/IFAS Extension Service Office.

Theresa Friday is the Residential Horticulture Extension Agent for Santa Rosa County. The use of trade names, if used in this article, is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product name(s) and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others.

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