

EarthKind™ Rose News for December

Take a Lesson from Farmer's Branch

Farmer's Branch could be called the rose capital of North Texas. As part of their beautiful city park system under the capable direction of Pam Smith, there is the recently planted National EarthKind™ research garden which has all 100 roses in the national program replicated four times. In addition there are demonstration gardens containing all the current EarthKind™ roses and a gorgeous memorial garden that exemplifies the best landscape design practices. The gardens, located near the Farmer's Branch municipal complex on Valley View Lane, should be on all north Texas gardeners "must see" list. Plan to spend at least a half-day enjoying the plants and design. These are practical gardens that will give you great ideas for your home landscape.

However, the garden that Master Gardeners should study with detailed interest is the small EarthKind™ test garden on the western edge of the park system. This is a small, but extremely well designed, Master Gardener test garden like those in about 40 other Texas counties. It consists of 3 gracefully curved linear beds along the bank of a stream running through the property. Farmer's Branch chose this design because it fit the property that was available. Several other configurations are available to fit different locations. There are five or six different cultivars of roses repeated in each of the 3 plantings. This is the minimal number of roses required for a test site. The soil was prepared according to research requirements and is kept well mulched. A drip irrigation system waters the roses only during dry spells. There is minimal upkeep as test roses are not pruned or fertilized and no pesticides are to be applied.



As you can see from the photograph this garden is a beautiful addition to an already lovely park. Master Gardeners in Farmer's Branch and across the state are enjoying the challenge of participating in real research that will make an important contribution to the beauty and environment of our state. This is an

exciting and important project for Master Gardeners. Certainly, it is one that will draw attention from the citizens of the community. There are a large group of gardeners who love roses, but gave up on them as too much effort for the return or who never tried to grow roses because they didn't think they had the time. EarthKind™ Roses are going to turn those gardeners around because it is so easy to be successful. They will love watching the trial garden then will go out and plant their own roses.

If your county does not have an EarthKind™ test site consider it as a project for 2009. Now is an excellent time to begin the planning. Then you will be all set to plant your roses in the spring of 2009. This project is extremely easy in comparison to so many other Master Gardener projects. It is relatively inexpensive and certainly has big impact in the community especially if it can be located in a highly visible location. For an information packet, please contact leach@ticnet.com.

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