

Home/Garden

Save your garden from the v

By PETER TONGE
The Christian Science Monitor

The turn of events is exciting, to say the least.

An unexpected business trip will take you to London this summer, and your spouse can accompany you. When the meetings are over, you will take in a few West End plays, and there will still be time enough over for that long-fancied boat trip up the Rhine.

There's just one minor flaw in the arrangements. You will be gone for the last two weeks in July and the

first week in August — the hottest and driest time of the year! When you get back, your garden will be one step short of the Sahara, unless it's blessed with unusually constant rainfall while you're gone — in which case the weeds will have run amok!

Either way, those guests who love your cookouts because of the fresh-from-the-garden treats you serve up, will have to take store-bought this year.

Inevitable? Not necessarily!

It doesn't have to be that way at all. There are some fairly simple steps that will allow you to leave

your garden and eat it too, so to speak, despite your absence. But you will need to start preparing for your midsummer departure now. So here are the steps to follow:

1. If your garden is still largely in the planning stage, select those varieties that will mature either before you leave or after you return.

Space plants somewhat farther apart so that there will be less competition for soil moisture. On the other hand, if your garden is already in place, don't be overly concerned. The remaining steps will still go a long way toward keeping your garden going while you're gone.

2. Start collecting the mulching materials: newspapers, plus grass clippings, shredded leaves, or straw. Don't skimp on the newspapers. You'll need to lay them on thickly before you leave.

3. Two weeks before leaving, weed the garden, apply a top dressing of compost or slow-release fertilizer, and water well. It is an established fact that a well-fed plant in a rich soil is more resistant to drought and heat. A foliar feeding of seaweed solution would help at this time, too.

4. One week before flying off, water deeply again, and if you don't have permanent mulch in place,

Japanese beetle traps: A way to be rid of sprays

By PETER TONGE
The Christian Science Monitor

To his delight, and somewhat to his surprise, Jeff Ball has all but eliminated Japanese beetles from his suburban garden, just south of Philadelphia — without using a single spray.

What's more, he has accomplished this feat even while neighboring gardens — a little more than a hundred yards away — continue to be overrun by the voracious little invaders.

Mr. Ball, host of the National Gardening Association's videotape series and author of several gardening books, has kept his roses, raspberries, and lawn almost blemish free through the judicious and persistent use of pheromone traps.

Ball's delight and surprise stem from the fact that every gardener he knew who had ever used pheromone Japanese beetle traps had all said the same thing: "Traps don't work." At least one university study says the same thing.

But he found differently.

Ball is not totally certain why the traps should work for him when neighboring yards are infested. But he suspects the key is "to site them right in the first place and stick with the program over several years."

Grubs of Japanese beetles eat the roots of lawn grass in their larval stage in fall, and again in spring. Then they pupate and emerge as hungry adults roughly four to six weeks after the last frost.

Some years back, Ball decided to try Japanese beetle traps in his yard. He sited the traps accurately: 50 feet from his garden, with the prevailing winds blowing the pheromone scent away from the raspberries he wanted to protect. Beetles attracted by the scent would come across the trap before they reached the raspberries.

That year, Ball collected five bags of the beetles, and about as many again the following year. He began to agree with the general assessment that traps may be good for monitoring, yet no good for lowering the count. But he persisted.

In the third year, the trap was dramatic — down to the equivalent of about one bag full. In the fourth year, his traps produced only a handful — the count has remained low the two seasons since.

At first, says Ball, "I thought something had happened to collapse the beetle population in my area generally. But then I found that neighbors as close as 200 yards away were still inundated with them."

Japanese beetles can fly considerably farther than 200 yards. But Ball theorizes that as long as there is food in the vicinity where they hatched, they don't bother.

He also believes that it took two years of trapping before the egg-laying



Recorder/Chuck Blake

The pleasure of roses

Pat
Leuchtman
Between
The Rows



Portlands, Bourbons or even the Hybrid Perpetuals and Hybrid Musks.

Passionate Nymph's Thigh with aptly delicate and blushing blossoms of pale pink is an Alba rose. In spite of the fragility of its flowers it has the robust constitution you would expect of a passionate nymph and has survived several winters next to my front door where it is tormented by falling icicles in the winter and the scratching of hens in the summer.

This Alba rose has done so well, that I have planted other Albas. Felicite Parmentier produces clusters of fragrant, many petaled pale pink flowers and is known to thrive where winters are bitter and summers are hot and dry. The Konegin von Danemark is a similar size, four to five feet tall and the pink flowers are a simpler, double form.

Another especially durable lady is aptly named, Madame Hardy. This gamask rose has white petals swirled around a pronounced green center.

Celsiana, another damask rose, is a real show stopper. It has luscious pink flowers borne so heavily that it needs some propping during the time of bloom.

I have one rose that is not named for a lady, or a friend, but it is so unusual that I wish now I had two of them and that they were planted opposite each other to welcome visitors to the Rose Walk. Rosa Rubrifolia is notable for its foliage which is an amazing shade of redish blue-green. The branches are graceful and I think it is extraordinarily beautiful. The flowers are tiny and pink, lasting only a day before they shatter and fall. But in the autumn the bush is covered with dramatic, nearly black hips.

Old roses are much more disease resistant than modern hybrids and, except for Japanese beetles, I have had any trouble with pests either. I plant them well, in full sun, and aside from a little spring care, all I have to do is admire them, pick them for the house, and maybe collect the flowers for sachet and potpourri because almost all of these are rich in fragrant rose oils.

All my roses are planted the same way, in a generous hole, that is filled in with soil that has been enriched with rotted manure, compost, and a little peat moss. Make sure the graft is below ground.

Roses are heavy feeders and drinkers which is why it's important to plant them in rich, humusy soil that is well drained. Good drainage is absolutely vital.

Sources: *Lowe's Own Root Roses, Six Sheffield Road, Nashua, NH 03062; Roses of Yesterday and Today, 802 Brown's Valley Road, Watsonville, CA 95076.*