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Saturday Oct 19, 2019 • 1PM - 6PM

PERFORMANCES BY:
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Stop and smell the roses

'Tis the season for America's official flower

BY DEBBIE ARRINGTON



This Roald Dahl rose smells as good as it looks.

PHOTO BY DEBBIE ARRINGTON

It's a good time to stop and smell the roses—or at least admire their beauty.

October is Sacramento's second rose season. From Capitol Park to the foothills, thousands of bushes are in full flower, creating a fragrant cloud in gardens big and small.

Some of the very best autumn blooms will be on display Saturday during the 56th annual Sierra Foothills Rose Society show at the Folsom Green Acres Nursery and Supply. One of the largest flower shows in our area, this free event features exhibition roses, arrangements, photography and more.

What makes this show unusual is its setting: The middle of a busy retail nursery.

The logic is simple: The best way to get more people interested in roses is to bring the flowers to where the most people will see them.

In past years, the club has held shows at the Sunrise Mall and other nurseries. This is the fourth time the event has been hosted by Green Acres.

"We love it," said Kay Jelten, the club's president. "We're in a big covered greenhouse, but it's open on the sides, so there's good ventilation. Lots of folks keep coming through—and meeting the public is one of the goals."

America's official flower, the rose has a natural attraction to even casual gardeners, who ooh and aah at the many unusual varieties on display.

"We enjoy answering questions from the public," Jelten said. "They like to come out to see—and smell—the roses."

The public also judges one category: Most fragrant rose.

"People are really fond of fragrant roses," she added. "If it looks good and smells good, they really love that."

They might even head out into the nursery to buy a bush to take home.

Anyone can enter a flower in the rose show. It just has to be home grown, though it helps if the person entering the bloom knows the variety. Make sure to cut a long stem (at least 10 inches), preferably with three sets of leaves. For display, the best roses are about half open, not tight buds.

While some rose growers had a spectacular summer with lots of flowers, others had a tough time.

"It was a challenging year," Jelten said of her own garden. "It was like the roses didn't know when to bloom. There were a lot of stops and starts. They'd grow like gangbusters for a while, but then shut back down, especially during hot weather."

Weird weather patterns also sparked pest infestations.

"I had the worse aphid outbreak I ever had," Jelten said. "That first little bit of rain [in September] brought out the pests. It was so unexpected. But I just got out the hose and blasted them."

The good news: The blooms should keep on coming for at least another month. When sniffing, just look out for the bugs. □



EVENT DETAILS

56th annual Sierra Foothills Rose Society show

Noon to 5 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 19, Green Acres Nursery and Supply, 205 Serpa Way, Folsom.

Admission and parking are free.

Contest entries, 6:30 to 10 a.m.

Saturday. First-time participants should arrive before 9 a.m.

Debbie Arrington, an award-winning garden writer and lifelong gardener, is co-creator of the Sacramento Digs Gardening blog and website.