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# THE AMATEUR GARDENER

by Vanda Lawrence

Our new garden here in Secondigny is progressing nicely but I've realised that we need autumn flowering perennials. For this reason I've chose *Gaura* (aka 'Wandflower', 'Whirling Butterflies' or 'Bee Blossom'). You will see them frequently in tubs and displays done by many of the local communes so they must be easily maintained and long-lasting – that's good enough for me!

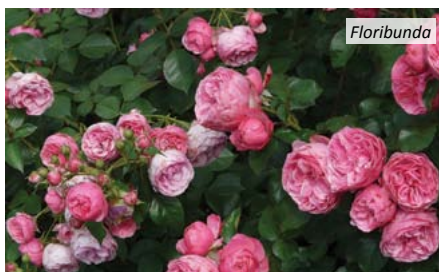
My other new plant for the autumn is *Tricyrtis hirta* or also known as 'Toad Lily' because of the spotty flowers. These need partial or full shade so are particularly useful for those dull corners in the garden. They flower from August to October/November and are fully hardy.

Unfortunately, neither of these plants have fragrant flowers but at least they are providing a splash of colour when everything else is finishing for the winter.

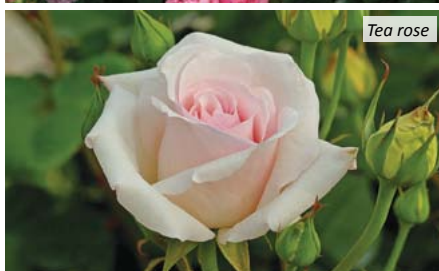
In the potager you can continue to sow peas ready for February/March and carrots ready for April/May. You will also be finishing harvesting and storing your crops. In the November 2013 issue of the magazine I gave you a list of good and bad neighbours in the storage shed. If you need to remind yourself of any of these you can still read the article on-line. Apart from that, just dig over the plot,



Climbing rose



Floribunda



Tea rose

turn in some compost and leave the weather to break the soil down ready for next year.

Finish lifting and dividing flowering perennials which have outgrown their space – any spare roots can be passed on to friends and neighbours; also finish re-planting the flower beds for next Spring's display.

Autumn/winter is the best time to plant roses, during their dormant season. But which ones to choose? Don't worry, there is something for every garden situation.

**Hybrid Tea Rose** - Bushy habit with flowers borne singly or in threes at the tips of stems and therefore the favourite choice for flower displays. Many are fragrant. Suitable for borders or containers.

**Floribunda** - As above but flowers are produced in clusters at the tips of stems. Each flower within the cluster opens at different times, so giving a long-lasting display through the summer. Many are fragrant. Suitable for borders or containers.

**Shrub Rose** - Bushy habit. Larger than Hybrid Tea or Floribunda. Single or double flowers borne in clusters. Modern varieties are repeat-flowering but older varieties only produce one heavy flush of flowers in early summer. Usually fragrant. Suitable for borders and hedging.

**Climbing Rose** - Stiff-stemmed upright with vigorous habit. Suitable for wall, fence or pergola. Wide range of flower type available and many are fragrant.

**Rambling Rose** - Vigorous climber with lax, flexible shoots. Flowers are single or double borne in clusters on short shoots from old wood. There are many fragrant varieties. Flowering normally occurs in one heavy flush during summer. In addition to being suitable for walls, fences or pergola they can also be grown into a tree to brighten a dull area.



Rosehips

**Miniature Rose** - Very compact with small leaves and flowers, suitable for containers, window boxes and border edges. They produce clusters of single or double flowers in flushes throughout the summer. Unfortunately, they are rarely fragrant.

**Where to grow them?** In a sunny position, sheltered from strong winds. Roses don't like to be crowded by other plants so they are not really suitable for a shrubbery. They don't like wet, soggy soils either, much preferring a well-drained site. Before planting, dig over the plot to at least 18" deep and improve all soils with well-rotted manure. Mix in a slow-release fertilizer as roses are very heavy feeders. Do not mulch your rose in its first year.

Climbing roses obviously need some support. This can be a rose arch of course, a lovely way to appreciate the beautiful flowers and these days it is possible to have thornless roses which is even better. If you plan to grow your climber up a wall you will need horizontal wires spaced about 18" apart up the wall and about 3" from the wall to allow air circulation. A wall will cause the soil at the base to be dry, so plant your climbing rose 12-18" away from the wall at a 45 degree angle. Otherwise planting is the same as for other roses with a bud union at soil level. Use canes to guide shoots towards the supports.

Prune newly planted floribunda, hybrid tea and shrub roses directly after planting to about 4" above ground level but do not prune rambling or climbing roses directly after planting.

Established hybrid tea and floribunda roses flower on new, current season's wood so can be cut back quite hard each year but shrub roses flower on wood which is at least 2 years old so require little pruning. Just take out dead, diseased or damaged stems ... the three d's.

Established climbing roses are pruned in late autumn or winter but rambling roses should be pruned in late summer.

It's quite complicated, isn't it? But worth putting in a little time and effort when we are repaid with such wonderful flowers later.