



## Result Demonstration Report

**2013 Earth-Kind® Dwarf Rose Trial**  
**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**  
**Taylor County**  
**Cooperator: Cisco College**  
**Robert Pritz, County Extension Agent, Abilene**

### Summary

Creating beautiful landscapes while dealing with the tough elements of Taylor County; high summer temperatures, extreme wind speeds and recent draught, is a challenge for many local gardeners. The community has identified the need for a database of resilient plants that will thrive in difficult conditions, yet not strap the area for natural resources, particularly water.

Earth-Kind® is the Texas Agrilife Extension Service program focusing on sustainable landscaping principles and practices. This educational program uses research-based information to provide maximum garden and landscape enjoyment while preserving and protecting the environment. The objective of Earth-Kind® is to combine the best of organic and traditional landscaping principles and practices to create a horticultural system based on real world effectiveness and environmental responsibility. The goals of Earth-Kind® include:

- Landscape water conservation
- Reduction of fertilizer and pesticide use
- Landscaping for energy conservation
- Reduction of landscape wastes entering landfills

Taylor County has chosen to demonstrate Earth-Kind® landscaping principles and practices so community members can learn to create beautiful, easy-care landscapes, while conserving and protecting natural resources and the environment.

In this result demonstration, 27 dwarf roses were planted and maintained using Earth-Kind® principals and then evaluated monthly to determine landscaping success in Taylor County. The project is to continue through 2017. At the conclusion of the trial, an Earth-Kind® Index value will be calculated and the information made available, within Taylor County and the state, via the Earth-Kind® Plant Selector Database.

The demonstration is ongoing.

## **Objective**

The objective of this demonstration is to observe dwarf roses in a harsh landscape setting and to rate their overall performance. Ongoing results are being tabulated and distributed to the Big Country Master Gardeners for use in educational community programs. Final quantitative results will be made available to the public through the Earth-Kind® Plant Selector Database.

## **Materials and Methods**

Twenty seven (27) dwarf rose cultivars were selected for evaluation based on use or potential use in local landscapes. Each cultivar was replicated four times in random placement throughout four trial beds located at Cisco College.

Cultivars included:

- Apricot Drift
- Brilliant Veranda
- Coral Drift
- Cream Veranda
- Cupcake
- Fairy
- Ice Drift
- Innocencia Vigarosa
- Marie Drift
- Marie Pavie
- Oso Easy Fragrant Spreader
- Oso Easy Honey Bun
- Oso Easy Paprika
- Oso Happy Smoothie
- Oso Happy Petit Pink
- Pamela Erikson
- Peach Drift
- Pink Drift
- Purple Rain
- Raspberry Vigarosa
- Red Drift
- Roxy sun Sprite
- Salmon Vigarosa
- Smart & Sassy
- Southern Peach
- Souvenirede St. Anne's
- Sweet Drift

The demonstration was implemented following Earth-Kind® Guidelines, prepared by Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Recommended Earth-Kind® sustainable landscaping principles and practices were used for: site selection, preparation, weed control, plant installation, mulching, irrigation, fertility, and pest management.

During 2012, the first full growing season in the trial, the roses were left to reestablish their root systems and no judging was conducted. In 2013, the roses were evaluated monthly by teams of volunteers during their active growing season. This monthly evaluation will be conducted again in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 before final results are tallied and submitted to the Earth-Kind® Plant Selector Database.

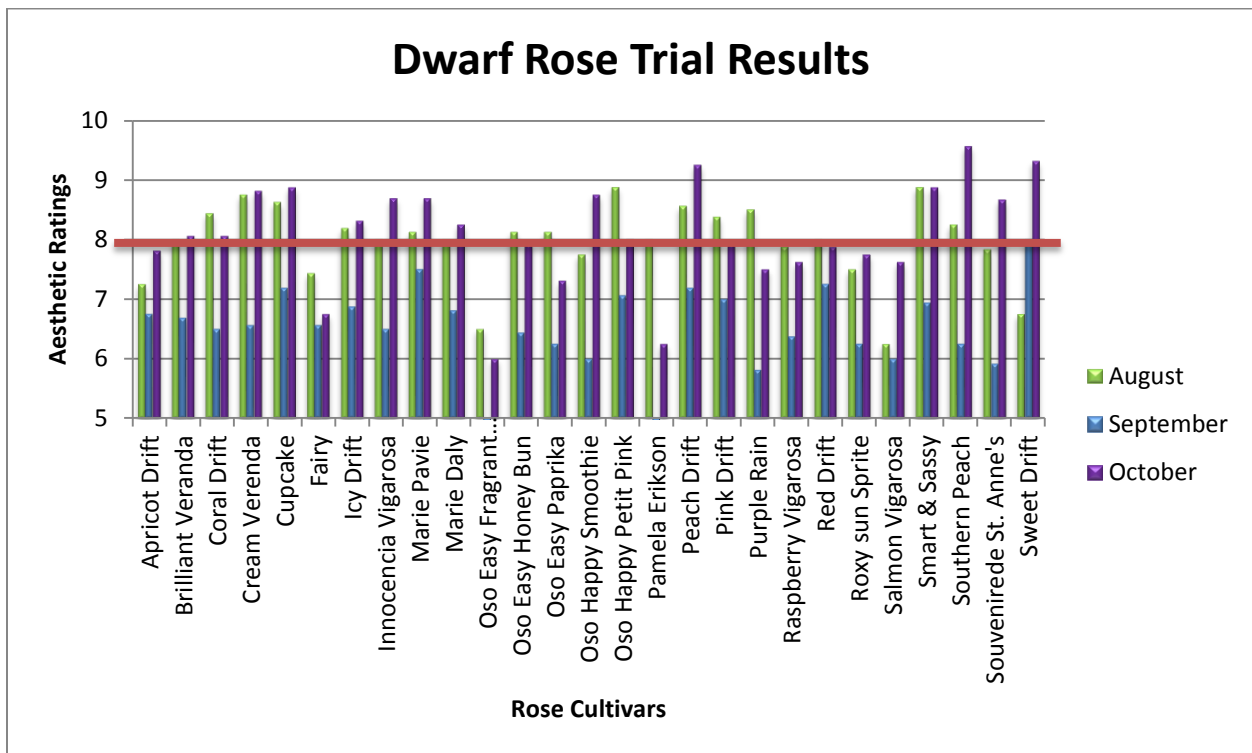
Plant ratings range from 0 to 10, with 10 being the best. The monthly rating recorded for each plant reflects the plant's overall landscape performance. The figure includes points for vigor, foliage quantity and color, blossom quantity and quality, fragrance, disease and insect tolerance/resistance, soil tolerance, growth habit and overall aesthetics.

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All data are collected on standardized spreadsheets. Average performance ratings were determined through statistical analysis of the volunteer judge assessments. Ongoing results are maintained by the Big Country Master Gardener Association.

**Results and Discussion**

The demonstration is in its second year. The site was prepared and roses planted in the first year. The roses were judged on overall landscape performance during the 2013 growing season. Results are depicted below. A red line has been included at the “8” rating, as this is a benchmark in the Earth-Kind® Plant Selector Database.



No roses have consistently met the Earth-Kind® benchmark yet. This could be attributed to the early stage of the trial or the extreme conditions experienced in Taylor County in Fall 2013. Further study will be required before decisive conclusions can be made.

**Conclusions**

Though this is an ongoing demonstration, differences in local acclimation and resource efficiency between the subject roses has been demonstrated. Appropriate selection of plant materials can have a significant impact on landscape quality in Taylor County. The Earth-Kind® trials aim to provide data for local gardeners to make their landscaping decision and encourage the minimized use of natural resources in their landscape maintenance.

This demonstration and associated educational activities are ongoing, as such, total knowledge gain has not yet been calculated.

## **Acknowledgements**

This project would not have been feasible without the volunteer hours of the Big Country Master Gardeners and our partnership with Carol Dupree, Provost of Cisco College. Additional AgriLife Extension Service members heavily contributed to this project, including Dr. Steve George and Agent Kim Conway.

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