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GARDEN CLIPPINGS

GARDEN CLIPPINGS

By Beth Botts
Published December 11, 2005

Tuck up tender roses

Only worry about hilling up roses too tender for a Chicago winter, such as hybrid teas, floribundas and miniatures, says University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener and lecturer Laury Lewis.

Most climbers, ramblers, shrub roses and species roses can get along on their own, though a layer of mulch over the roots does any plant good.

For vulnerable roses, pile mulch high enough to cover the graft union -- the bump near the base of the rose plant where one variety (not hardy to Zone 5) has been grafted onto roots of a hardier type.

Foam rose cones are a bad idea, Lewis says; moisture and heat build up inside and lead to disease and damage.

Awww, isn't that cute?

An aluminum can arrives in the mail, you open it and water the soil inside. In a week or so, a plant pops up with the message "I LOVE YOU" printed on a leaf. How does it work? A Spokane, Wash., company figured out how to laser-print a message on a cotyledon -- the leaf precursor inside a seed. The plant is a sword bean (*Canavalia gladiata*), an Asian vine that will grow for a couple of months if you give it something to twine around. It's \$9.95, plus \$4 shipping and handling, from www.message-plant.com or 888-416-4722.

In good company

Combine serious discussion of environmental and sustainability issues with a cosmopolitan or mojito when GreenDrinks, a networking organization for urban tree huggers, holds its monthly cocktail hour. The next meeting is 5:30 to 9 p.m. Jan. 19 at the Jefferson Tap & Grill, 325 N. Jefferson St. Admission is \$4. For more information, see www.chicagogreendrinks.org



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