

## **WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IN THE GARDEN !!!**

By Leticia Friesz

I've learned the hard way that you should paint all your garden tools with bright day glow colors. Last week I spent over half an hour trying to find my favorite clippers. I just had them!!! Where did I leave them? I emptied the compost barrel out twice thinking I had tossed them into the bin along with a hand-full of weeds. They were no where!! Then I walked up to my apple trees and there they were in plain view on the bench under the trees. If I had painted them a bright color, I could have seen them through the apple tree leaves.

Next, I learned to pay attention when those bottles of pesticides say "wear protective clothing". I know now that's what you should do!!! I have always been fearless in the garden, not being afraid of spiders or lizards, I didn't think anything could hurt me. So I sprayed away, with little regard for "protective clothing". Then one morning as I sprayed *Funginex* on the roses, the garden hose morphed into a large anaconda snake, and attacked me. As I fought it off, I sprayed myself full in the face with the *Funginex*. I ran into the house, tore off my clothes and jumped into the shower. I scrubbed from head to toe! Now when I do any spraying, I look like the "Michelin Man". I wear my shoes and socks, long pants, long sleeved shirt, a scarf around my face, large goggles, and another large scarf over my hair. After spraying I throw everything I wore into the wash. What I really would like is one of the suits they wore in the old Flash Gordon science fiction films.

Last of all, I've learned to wear my shoes and socks. I have always loved going barefoot in the summer. As a young girl growing up in Ohio, going barefoot in summer was your reward for enduring the long winter. The soles of my bare feet got so tough that I could beat my cousin Keith, at "foot tickling". This is a fun game played by two or more children. You set on the grass, and each child has the bare foot of another child. Then you begin tickling the bottom of their foot and whoever holds out the longest without laughing or pulling away, wins. So, I felt I was good enough to work bare footed in rubber flip-flops in the rose garden. NOT SO! As I leaned over to pick off a yellowing leaf from a large *Iceberg*, that dastardly *Graham Thomas*, (a David Austin rose), snuck a long prickly branch under my foot, on top of the rubber sole. When I put my body weight back onto the shoe, I ran the thorns into the bottom of my arch. It hurt so bad, and was such a shock that I lunged forward into the *Iceberg* bush which managed to "bite" me from my face to my leg. Somehow I managed to grab the fence behind the bush and push myself back. I fell onto the lawn with such a thump that I bounced. There I lay, moaning and groaning, and bleeding from head to foot. Now I wear old tennis shoes with socks.

One last thing I've learned, you are allowed to talk out loud to yourself while working in the garden. The plants don't mind a bit, in fact some people say the plants will often respond to kind words spoken, and others say they've even seen a rose that was not doing well, shape up and be excellent when threatened with destruction.