One of the rose garden's many bounties occurs each fall as the last roses bloom and succulent rose hips form. These hips are actually seed pods and are edible. Remember --- roses and apples are cousins!! So the hip forms like a little "rose apple". Depending on the type of rose, the hips will differ in shape, size, sweetness, color and time it takes to ripen. As with all fruit, you will know when the hip is ripe because the sides will "give" slightly when you gently squeeze the pod. In my yard I have roses that make big, round hips that start out green and slowly turn bright pumpkin orange. There are two other bushes whose hips are slender and "flask" or "coke bottle" shaped and they tend to turn reddish brown. The best and biggest hips in my yard are on Altissimo (a climber) and Hansa (one of the rugosas).

The hip forms after the bloom has withered, so if you want to harvest hips you must stop deadheading the roses in August.

When I was a little girl, my grandmother taught me to make green apple jelly. She also adapted her recipe to make jelly from the rose hips in the fall. It's pretty simple, and very tasty. Rose hips have from 10 to 100 times more vitamin C than most natural products along with vitamins A, E, B-1, niacin, K and P along with calcium, phosphorous and iron.

**PREPARATIONS**

If you want to try this winter ritual, here's how to start.

Be very sure the roses haven't been sprayed with insecticide or dusted with sulfur. This is very important. You want clean, untainted rose hips for your jelly.

Watch the hips form and when they are the right color (or you are sure they are ripe), pick them off. Most rose hip recipes require a good amount of rose hips.

Have sterilized jelly jars ready.

Wash the hips and chop them (nowadays, I use a food processor). Since this is going to be a jelly (which will be strained any way) you don't need to remove the skin or pick out the seeds. Just don't puree the stuff until the seeds break up -- if broken, they add bitterness to the jelly.

(Some recipes call for apple pieces to provide extra juiciness, which reduces the quantity of hips needed but not the particular taste and aroma of the hips.)
"NO PECTIN" ROSE HIP JAM

Boil 2 lbs of chopped rose hips in 2 pints of water until good and tender. Rub the pulp through a fine sieve to remove the seeds and basically make a puree.

Peel, quarter and remove seeds from 4 to 5 green apples and boil in water until soft. Rub them through the sieve also.

Combine the apple and rose hip puree with 2 1/2 to 3 cups of sugar and 1/3 of a cup of lemon juice. The solution should be cloudy with minutes bits of the rose and apple pulp.

Bring to a boil and continue boiling for another 15 minutes.

When it has reached the desired consistency, pour into sterilized jars and seal.

SUMMER ROSE HIP JELLY

Place 1 quart of last winter's dried apple slices into a deep cooking pot, cover with warm water and let stand overnight (or at least 8 hours). The next day add 1 quart of fresh rose hips to the pot and cover with warm water.

Bring the pot to a boil and cook until very soft. Drain off the liquid through a jelly bag into a new pot.

Add 2 cups of sugar for each pint of juice and boil for another 20 minutes or until mixture jells into a thick mass when dropped from a spoon into cold water.

Pour into sterilized jars and seal.

ROSE HIP MARMALADE

Soak one pound of washed rose hips in water for a couple of hours to soften the skins. After soaking, bring to a boil in the same water and cook for 15 minutes.

Strain the liquid into a smaller pot and for each cup of juice, add one cup of granulated sugar. Stir well.

Boil the sweetened juice until it reaches a thick syrup consistency.

Add the boiled rose hips (you can chop them into chunks if you desire). Boil syrup mixture until the hips are very tender.

Pour into sterilized jars and seal.