



The city of Helena partnered with Texas A&M University to bring an Earth-Kind Rose Confirmational Trial to the city. A ground breaking ceremony will be held at the Helena Sports Complex on Oct. 14 at 8 a.m. (File)

Helena Rose Trial ground breaking ceremony to be held Oct. 14



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HELENA—Saturday, Oct. 14, will mark a special day for the Helena Beautification Board and the city of Helena as a ground breaking ceremony will be held to officially open a complete Earth-Kind™ Rose Confirmational Trial.

The trial is a result of a partnership between the city and the Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension to plant some 78 rose shrubs from 24 cultivars along the drive leading to the Helena Sports Complex.

Helena Beautification Board Chairman Chris VanCleave, Helena Beautification Board Vice Chairman Brian Puckett, Helena Mayor Mark Hall, State Senator Cam Ward, State Representatives Matt Fridy and Allen Farley, John McMillian with the State of Alabama Department of Agriculture and Jon Corkern with the American Rose Society will all be in attendance at the ground breaking ceremony set to begin at 8 a.m.

“The Helena Earth-Kind trials mark a significant investment in the future of garden roses across the United States,” VanCleave said. “People want beautiful roses in their gardens to enhance the beauty of their yards and enrich their lives. What they don’t want are roses that require a lot of care and upkeep. This rose trial is a first step toward identifying cultivars that provide a beautiful garden presence, are disease resistant, drought and pest tolerant.”

Anyone is welcome to attend the ground breaking ceremony where a variety of things are set to take place including a trial grounds walk through, remarks from beautification board members and state and local officials and of course, the ceremonial planting and photos.

Helena will be recognized as the only city to complete a full confirmational trial for Earth-Kind roses which is a trademarked landscape program developed by Texas A&M based solely on research that began in 1992 built on a foundation of sustainability.

“This trial is conducted in less than perfect growing conditions, on purpose,” Puckett said. “The roses will be planted, watered in for the first season and then left to their own devices. We will monitor and evaluate per the rigorous guidelines set for us by our partners at Texas A&M. It’s this trial by fire that will reveal those ‘tough as nails’ cultivars that could ultimately join the list of other roses that have become Earth-Kind roses. The need to offer environmentally responsible plants is growing and the AgriLife program at Texas A&M under the direction of Dr. Steve George has conducted years of field research and evaluation that has now set the standard for how these types of trial are conducted and we are proud to be a part of this effort.”

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