

“Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses, a box where sweets compacted lie.”-George Herbert



APRIL-IN OUR ROSE GARDEN:

With the first blooms all around and rose shows just around the corner, there are duties we need to take care of to insure that our gardens are in tip-top shape. Three keys to good spring roses are watering, feeding and spraying.

Watering- Maintain a good moisture level in the top 6 - 8 inches of your rose bed where those important feeder roots are located. If the rains have been nice, keep tabs on the dampness of the soil in the rose beds using the best "moisture indicator" of all - your finger!

Feeding- Are you interested in maintaining good bush growth and having cut roses for the house and color in the yard? Then continue to feed with a dry or granular feed once a month. Use one cup per plant around the dripline of the bush. Soluble feeders need to apply your favorite feed every weeks giving each bush at least one gallon poured around the dripline of the bush. With our spring rose show right around the corner, you might try giving your roses a mix of the following to add to the size, substance and color of the bloom. Two weeks prior to the show, mix in a 32 gal. garbage can: (1)Two cups of Superbloom- 12-55-6; (2)One cup of fish emulsion; (3)One cup Sprint 330 (formerly called Sequestrene). Stir well for mixing and give each bush at least one gallon of the mix. Give miniatures one quart each.

Spraying- Remember, prevention is the name of the game. Every 5 - 7 days should keep your rose beds disease-free.

1. Blackspot & Mildew- Triforine (consider rotating sprays every month or so

with Immunex, or other good fungicide), one Tbsp. per gal. of spray. Make sure to spray the top and bottom of the foliage.

2. Thrips- Mist only the buds and opening flowers to keep your blooms clean from this culprit. Use either Orthene liquid (2 Tbsp.), Orthene powder (2 tsp.) per gal. of mixture, or Cygon2E, or Malathion.

3. Spider mites- (These mites usually aren't visible to the naked eye, but their damage is. As they feed on plant tissues, the pests inject toxins into the plants, causing white or yellow dots on leaves. Might notice webbing on the plants.) Either water wash the bottom side of the foliage on a 3-day interval cycle for nine days, or spray the bottom side of the foliage with Bayer Advanced 3-in-1.

The Fine Art of Pruning- Knowing why you grow roses dictates your plan for managing the flower production. Finger pruning is the process of rubbing off unwanted new shoots so you get the shape of bush you want and the bush can be forced to produce a few "large" blooms or many small blooms. If you decide to do nothing, there will be an overabundance of new stems pointed in every direction with a large number of small flowers. This is perfect for the person who wants to limit their time doing rose chores if they just want lots of color in the landscape. A small amount of finger pruning and clipping, reducing the number of new shoots per stem, can direct the growth outward and upward developing a shapelier bush with lots of color and some nice, long stems for cutting. The serious exhibitor will only allow 2 or 3 new stems to develop per cane to get the large, showy flowers.

New shoots that do not seem vigorous, small in diameter, short and have a brown tip rather than a bud should be removed cleanly back to the main cane. These are blind shoots and will never make a flower. New shoots that are a foot long or less that do not form a bud should be cut in half. They will take away from the size of other flowers so why not recycle them to get a jump on the second cycle.

* Remember To Water Your Bushes Thoroughly Before Feeding Or Spraying!

ORGANIC ROSE PROGRAM - HG (see Feb2do list for complete program)

Watering: If possible, save and use rainwater. If not, add 1 tbsp. of natural apple cider vinegar per gal. of water. If all else fails, just use tap water but, in any case don't over water. Avoid salty well water.

For best results foliar feed with Garrett Juice every 2 weeks, but at least once a month. When soil is healthy, nothing but Garrett Juice is needed in the spray.

Pest Control Program: Add the following to Garrett Juice and spray as needed.

Garlic tea - 1/4 cup/gal. or label directions for minor insect or disease infestations.

Citrus oil, orange oil, or d-limonene - 1 oz./gal. of water as a spray, 2 oz./gal. of water as a drench.

Potassium bicarbonate - 1 rounded tbsp./gal. for minor diseases.

Liquid biostimulants - Use per label - Agrispon, AgriGro, Medina, Bio-Innoculant or similar product.

Neem - Use per label directions for more serious insect and disease infestations.
Fish emulsion - 2 oz./gal. for additional nutrients (may not be needed when using compost tea).

Please note, most of the information shared on our monthly tip pages was obtained from Research-based sources (see contributors acknowledgements below), and from individuals who are considered very knowledgeable on a particular subject.

Many thanks to our contributors:

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