

“Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns; I am thankful that thorns have roses.”-Alphonse Karr



JANUARY- IN OUR ROSE GARDEN:

If El Nino does finally raise its ugly self in our area, there can be periods of wet and mild weather which can bring about perfect conditions for downy mildew, something that we don't want in our gardens. Here's what to look for: **1.) Ideal Temperatures-** Spores will germinate and become active with temperatures between 50 and 75 degrees and relative humidity above 85%, especially during periods of wet and rainy weather. **2.) Visual Description-** At first, purple splotches will appear on the foliage and canes, then it will turn a camouflage pattern of brown, yellow and green. Then the foliage will fall off (and this dropped foliage should be cleaned up because the spores can be reactivated if the right conditions occur). **3.) Preventive Measures-** to help prevent downy mildew in the garden, make Additional Winter Chores:

a.) Continue to provide some moisture for your roses (water beds deeply if no rain for 10 days), especially newly planted ones. Remember, container roses need to be checked more frequently.

b.) Check for spider mites, especially on miniatures. If you do find mites, treat with either a water-washing every third day for nine days, or spray with Bayer Advanced 3-in-1, Bayer All In One, or Seaweed & Molasses.

c.) This is an ideal month to continue to transplant your roses.

d.) Make sure all new rose beds have been completed so the soil will have time for settling. (*Water them to hasten settling. Don't depend on Mother Nature!)

e.) Check winter dressing of compost or manure and keep at least a 2" depth on the beds into Feb. Also, you might consider kelp, fishmeal, blood meal, alfalfa, or other organics that take time for the microbes to make their goodies available. Some rosarian's use soil conditioners about this time of year. Nitron A-35, Medina, or even gypsum are used just before or sometime after the organics are added.

f.) Make sure your pruners have been cleaned, oiled and sharpened for the upcoming bush pruning in later February. Using a file or whetstone will provide you with a sharp, smooth cutting edge. Remember, dull pruners can damage the bark and cambium layers of rose canes leaving them open to fungi, which can cause dieback.

g.) Now would be a good time to flush out your sprayer to remove the alkaline residue buildup. We use a mixture of half distilled vinegar and water and run it through the sprayer and it does a great job.

h.) We handle mixtures, compost, and manures, etc., so it would be a good time to check with your doctor to see when you had your last tetanus booster shot. It's recommended at least every ten years, but some rose people feel a shorter shot cycle of five years is safer. Get your doctor's opinion, and get it updated if it's needed.

i.) Start making an inventory of spring rose supplies that you will need including spray materials, feeds (soluble or granular), iron supplements (Sprint 330, Ironite), organics, etc.

j.) If you water your roses using the Damm system (or any system using nozzles), now would be a good time to remove each nozzle and remove the pin from the nozzle and soak them both in a solution like Lime Away for a few minutes. This will remove any alkaline buildup on the emitters and pins. Wash with clean water and fasten them back into the system.

-From "A YEAR IN THE ROSE GARDEN": by A.J. "Pop" Warner

a) Sharpen and oil shears; maybe get a new pruning saw.

b) Finish moving bushes that need moving. Don't prune yet, but tie the canes together so you can handle the bushes and dig them without getting all scratched up.

c) Finish the bed you should have completed last October.

d) Keep the chickweed (and other junk!) pulled out of established beds. It grows and seeds like crazy in cool weather and seeds now are future weeds multiplied to the nth power. Chickweed is edible; it is a shame it is not palatable.

e) Add to your mulch. A good mulch will keep the soil cool during the winter warm spells and tend to prevent damaging premature growth.

f) Order new labels. You know the names of your roses but your visitors do not.

g) Throw away tag-ends of pesticides that you think may no longer be effective. They will not be any better in the spring.

Please note, most of the information shared on our monthly care 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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