

“But he who dares not grasp the thorn should never crave the rose.”-Anne Bronte



JULY-IN OUR ROSE GARDEN:

Since the roses are not growing as rapidly as during the April-May-June period, they do not need as much fertilizer. One-fourth to one-third (depending on rainfall) cup of 10-20-10 scattered on the mulch once a month has seemed to be about right in our garden. In the unlikely event that we get heavy persistent rain (3 inches, "in series", without sufficient drying) more fertilizer will be needed as it leaches out. Normally, supplemental watering (unless we forget it and let it run all night) will not remove as much fertilizer from the bed as will a heavy rain.

Yellow leaves (chlorosis) are common in rose gardens during the high stress time of summer. Among the common factors are chemical burns from too strong of concentrations of spray or rose food especially when the bush is not "fully hydrated". Some chemicals are photo-toxic during very warm weather even sprayed during early morning or evening (Please, read and follow directions carefully!). Blackspot and spider mites are the most common cause of yellow leaves during the summer. Damaged old canes many times have yellow leaves on them. Inspect and cut back below the affected cane to an outward leaflet and seal. Lack of available iron or nitrogen in the soil is probably the cause of yellow leaves on new growth with darker leaves lower on the bush. Check the pH, if below 6.0 use dolomite lime to adjust. One type of yellow leaf is not a symptom of a problem, but rather the result of a previous cut just above a leaf axil. When new growth appears on that stem it nearly always comes from the axil or base of that top leaflet and that leaflet dies off. It is easily pulled off.

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

July and August separate the rose growers from those who just planted some roses. Once one has learned to have good roses in mid-summer in our climate he has become a Rosarian and has opened the door to a much greater enjoyment of one of God's great gifts. The statement that, "Roses always look bad in summer" is not true. Only neglected roses look bad in summer.

Roses will tolerate a bit (but not too much) of benign neglect in summer. For example, the tedious chore of cutting spent blooms can be modified to simply snapping off the dead flowers at the peduncle. The rose bed will look just as good and roses probably will be the better for it. They can use all the leaves possible including those with only three leaflets.

We should not let our roses go too long without water, however. The three-times-a-week routine suggested by some growers is necessary only in very loose sandy soil but a deep watering as the soil begins to dry will be good in any bed. Some varieties, such as FRAGRANT CLOUD and its close relatives are more susceptible to water deprivation than others, and if allowed to get too dry, will defoliate completely.

Another treatment of a heaping tablespoon or two of epsom salt may stimulate some more much needed basal breaks. We would hope they come sooner rather than later, because breaks after August or September usually are winter damaged too much to be of value at pruning time next February.

Mildew should not be a problem until the end of September. The spores of this disease need cool nights to germinate and we are not likely to get night-time temperatures below 80 degrees for quite a while yet. With routine spraying we should not see it.

Blackspot has already struck some unsprayed or improperly sprayed gardens. Routine weekly application of

Funginex or Triforine normally will keep the garden completely free of this disease, but if it does appear, think back to where you forgot to spray. Get out some Maneb (Dithane m-45 or Manzate) and use at 1/2 Tablespoon per gallon along with the Triforine for two or three sprayings. Many of us do not like to use Maneb unless blackspot appears because it leaves a dusty residue on the leaves and has a tendency to burn. Also it tends to clog the sprayer if it is not very carefully cleaned after each use.

Insects tend to damage only the blooms at this time of the year, so there is more reason than ever to use insecticides sparingly, only on the buds and blooms, and only when the insects are evident. Malathion or Orthene is the best thing we have found for stink bugs and corn ear worms, with Sevin also doing a good job. Both are broad spectrum chemicals which kill almost everything that eats them (except spider mites), so many of us try to keep them off everything but the buds. Some of us are beginning to believe that if we do not kill our friendly insects they can help us check the mite and scale population.

Mites have partially defoliated a number of gardens in our area. Plants that have lost their leaves have been very seriously weakened. With control of the mites, plenty of water and light fertilization they will recover and make some fine blooms this fall. However, we must remember they will be especially prone to cold damage this winter and may require extra protection. Miticides are expensive and becoming hard to get, but not as expensive as buying new rose bushes. Avid is still giving good results, Green Light Red Spider Mite Spray or water. (Visit the San Antonio Rose Society's web site @ <http://www.sarosesociety.org>)

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 gallon of water. If all else fails, just use tap water but 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. During our hot Texas months, try watering and spraying in the morning.

PEST CONTROL PROGRAM:

Add the following to Garrett Juice and spray as needed.

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

Citrus oil, orange oil, or d-limonene - 1 oz./gall. 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 (should not be used when temps. are 85-90 or above) for more serious insect and disease infestations.

Fish emulsion - 2 oz./gal. for additional nutrients (may not be needed when using compost tea).

* In updating our collection of useful tips, we have come across several comments, instructions and chemicals that are being replaced with newer techniques and materials. The tips have been updated accordingly.

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 for sharing their wisdom so we can all learn and share with one another.

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HG – John Howard Garrett, aka the “Dirt Doctor”, (visit his web site @ www.dirtdoctor.com)

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