

“Won’t you come into the garden? I would like my roses to see you.”-Richard Brinsley Sheridan



MARCH-IN OUR ROSE GARDEN:

Hopefully the weather will cooperate so pruning the large roses will be completed by the end of the first week and the miniatures can be finished by the second week. **Only the once-a-year blooming OGR's** are to be shaped and pruned after they bloom. Selecting and planting new roses should be done as early as possible. The best bushes (strongest) go to the early buyers and those bushes that are planted quickly have the best chance of surviving. **Establishing a good root system** before the plant leafs out, and avoiding all chemical fertilizers for the first month ensures the plant won't dehydrate when the warm temperatures arrive.

Mildew develops when warm days and cool nights have been present for 3 to 4 days. **Black spot** comes out of its dormancy when warm days, warm nights, and lots of moisture is present. Therefore, our first fungal attack in the Spring will be from powdery mildew followed a month or two later by black spot. **Both can be prevented** by pre-spraying bushes when they are cut back and before much foliage is established, with something like Daconil or Triforine (formerly Funginex). **Daconil** may do a better job when outside temperatures are no higher than the 80's. (Neem oil: "Rose Defense", and others can be used if temperatures don't get up above 90). Maneb or Manzate are very inexpensive but sure preventive controls for black spot alone. Compass carries a hefty beginning price, but per application, it is price-effective and is effective for both fungal diseases.

It is not necessary to spray for insects until they appear. Aphids are the chief insect pests at this time and they can be controlled with almost any good insecticide (sprayed just on the new foliage where the insects are feeding). If established roses were not fertilized in late Feb., they should be fed at once. **One weed pulled now prevents** umpteen in April. If we have very many weeds, we may not be using enough mulch.

Be sure to water before and after spraying and feeding.

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

Thoroughly spray for fungus diseases while the bushes are cut back and before much foliage is established. It is essential to prevent the start of blackspot rather than to cure it. Don't miss a week from now on.

Continue touch-up pruning. There will be a few canes that, for one reason or another, simply do not sprout and grow properly. Perhaps there was winter damage or disease we overlooked in Feb. It is best to take them out now, back to the source to encourage new basal shoots.

Finger prune regularly.

Some Rosarians advise taking off the old mulch and composting it, on the theory that diseases lurk in it. Leave it alone and add to it. This writer has followed this practice for the last 15 years with no disease buildup.

Add to mulch before new basal breaks show up, to lessen the chance of damage to the tender growth during application.

It is not necessary or even desirable to remove old mulch or scratch the fertilizer into the soil. Except for fish and blood meal, simply scatter the fertilizer on the mulch like feeding the chickens and let nature take its course. A good rain or heavy watering will get the fertilizer where it belongs.

Watch for basal breaks (vigorous shoots coming from, or within 5 inches above the bud union). Some pinch them when they get 1 or 2 feet high; others let them go ahead and flower first. In either case, tie them off to a stake or another cane. They are very fragile at this time and if the wind or the neighbor's dog breaks them off, it may be a long time before you get another.

Keep some buckets, bags or pine straw around to protect new base shoots from the late frosts. Providing it does not freeze, only a light cover or shelter will prevent frost damage. (Note: Contrary to folklore, washing down a frost-covered plant will only make the damage worse.)

Newly planted bushes that bloom later this month will do better if the first blooms are removed. Snap them off at the peduncle and use them by floating in a bowl and leaving the foliage on the bush.

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 as 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 (visit his web site to get his recipe or pick it up at a local nursery) and spray as needed.

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

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

Liquid biostimulants - Use per label – Medina Soil Activator, or similar product.

Neem or plant oil products - Use per label directions for more serious insect and disease infestations.

For THRIPS, apply beneficial nematodes to the soil in early spring.

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

SPRAY SCHEDULE:

1st spraying at pink bud in the spring. 1st two sprayings should include Garrett Juice and garlic tea (additional sprayings as necessary). For best results spray every two weeks, but at least once a month. When soil is healthy, nothing but Garrett Juice is needed.

* 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.

PMA – Purple Martin Association; visit their web site @ www.purplemartin.org.

SB – Steve Brown, meteorologist with KSAT; visit their web site @ www.ksat.com.

CF – Calvin Finch, (former) Bexar Co. extension agent for horticulture, Texas Agricultural Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

EO – Edna Ortiz, (former) Bexar Co. extension agent for horticulture, Texas Agricultural Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

AJW – A.J. “Pop” Warner, Consulting Rosarian, writer of the book “A Year in the Rose

TAE – Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Bexar County (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

LR – Lynn Rawe, (former) Bexar Co. extension agent for horticulture, Texas Cooperative Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News); visit their web site @ www.bexar-tx.tamu.edu.

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

NS – Neil Sperry, Texas horticulturalists, Publisher “Neil Sperry’s GARDENS” and contributor to S.A. Express-News. Visit his web site @ www.neilsperry.com.

ROGB – Rodale Organic Gardening Books

WBC – Wild Bird Center

JB – Jerry Baker, America’s Master Gardener, aka “The Yardener”.

RAG – Rene A. Guzman, (information compiled) courtesy S.A. Express-News

TGS- Texas Gardener Seeds. E-newsletter from Texas Gardener Magazine; visit their web- site @ www.texasgardener.com.

EB- Ed Bradley, Consulting Rosarian, Master Gardener, San Antonio Rose Society Member

Compiled by MG Brian Townsend