

“A true poet does not bother to be poetical. Nor does a nursery gardener scent his roses.”-Jean Cocteau



MAY-IN OUR ROSE GARDEN:

Watch for spider mites. If you think you do not have them by the end of this month it is likely you either have sprayed, washed with water or just don't see well. If the roses are not doing as well as you think they should, take another look or maybe have a Consulting Rosarian come and look.

Watch for basal breaks. These are large vigorous shoots coming from the bud union or from within about 5 inches of it. They are easily broken off so arrange to tie them to a stake or another cane until they have hardened. They are valuable to the life and longevity of the bush, so take care of them. When they are about 2 feet high it is useful to pinch them off at the first blunt bud, thus encouraging strong branches and preventing candelabras.

Avoid cutting blooms with long stems from new bushes. Cut very short stems or snap blooms off at the peduncle and float in a bowl.

On established bushes, unless the bloom is needed for a show, take no more stem than necessary. Leave two good sets of leaves on the bush. If the bush is well grown this will provide ample stems for arranging (and if it is not well grown the blooms should not be cut with long stems anyhow).

A quick and simple way to cut spent blooms ("dead-head" as our British and Canadian friends say), is to snap off the faded bloom at the peduncle. The roses repeat faster and seem to grow better than if we go through and cut down farther on the stems.

Remove blind shoots and leaf rosettes. A leaf rosette is a cluster of leaves, usually far down the cane, which has no bloom bud. Blind shoots are stems which come out and taper down to nothing with no bloom bud. A cane which has nothing but blind shoots should be removed at the source.

Lightly stir the mulch. Many mulches pack down and need to be fluffed up for better insulation and better water penetration.

Add to your mulch. If it is allowing weeds to grow or seems to be thin, more mulch will help kill weeds and keep the ground cool.

***For summer feeding, use a slow-release fertilizer like Osmocote (3-4 month formula). Applied in late May or Early June, it will feed your roses all summer.*-EB-**

-From “A YEAR IN THE ROSE GARDEN” by A.J.”Pop Warner

The optimum temperature for growth of both blackspot and mildew on roses is around 70 degrees F., and by the end of the month we probably will be averaging well over that figure. As the weather gets hot some will try to stretch the spraying intervals or use weaker than specified dilution of spray materials. As many of us have found out, this is a mistake.

Keep beds well-mulched. In our area a heavy mulch has proven very beneficial. Almost any organic material can be used that lets the rain and air through, yet minimizes evaporation from the soil. A good mulch keeps down the weeds, keeps the soil cooler and adds humus to the soil. Better growers in our area do not neglect it. Fluff it up from time to time with a fork to maximize its insulating quality.

Green wood cuttings can be made now, using one of the many rooting methods available.

May is the best time to bud and now is a good time to learn how. Most serious rose growers will want to learn to bud the varieties not readily available commercially.

The first week or two of May usually is the lowest point of the entire blooming season. Watch for spider mites. Take action at the first indication. They are not too hard to control if we do not let them get a head start. First-year gardens often escape mites if they were planted with clean stock, but before long the birds, the wind or whatever will bring them in.

Keeping spent blooms cut will make the garden look better, reduce thrips and improve the growth of the bush. If one is short of time, simply snapping off the faded bloom at the peduncle is quite acceptable. It may even make for better growth of young plants.

Adjust fertilizer application to the weather conditions. A period of heavy rains can leach much of the fertilizer, especially nitrogen, out of the soil. On the other hand, in dry times when the only water is the limited amounts applied by the busy rosarian, very limited amounts of fertilizer are needed. It has been established that if all the fertilizer applied were available and used by the plant it would take only about 2 ounces per plant per year. The rest we lose by leaching or other reasons.

Weekly spraying with Triforine has kept most rose gardens in the area free of mildew, but the few who did contract it brought it under control with Triforine, Daconil, or E-Rose. Those who had blackspot, or suspected they were vulnerable, added 1/2 tablespoon of Dithane M-45 to their spray mixture with excellent results.

* 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, also visit their web site @ <http://www.purplemartin.org>

WBC – Wild Bird Center

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

MB – Malcom Beck, lecturer on Organic gardening and Founder of Gardenville Products

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

NS – Neil Sperry, publisher of Neil Sperry's Garden Magazine, also Garden Expert for S.A. Express-News, visit his web site @ www.neilsperry.com

SB – Steve Browne, meteorologist with KSAT (visit their web site @ www.ksat.com)

C.S.C. – Chris S. Corby, Editor and Publisher of Texas Gardener magazine.

HW – Howard Walters, the Rambling Rosarian

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

AJW – A.J. “Pop” Warner, from his book “A Year In The Rose Garden”

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

LR – Lyn Rawe, Bexar Co. extension agent for horticulture, (visit their website @ <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/>), Texas Cooperative Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

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

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