

Rose Care Month-By-Month By York Area Rose Society

www.yorkarearosesociety.com

The purpose of this handout is to help the beginning rose grower, grow better roses and at the same time enjoy them. The thing to remember is that roses are a lot like people. They need food, water, and a little TLC to shine.

DECEMBER – JANUARY – FEBRUARY

Enjoy your rose catalogs. Order some bareroot roses for the next year. Decide where to locate new roses if you did not prepare new beds in the fall. If your roses are in containers and are being winterized, remember to water them. A handful of ice cubes on the top of the mulch work well. When they have melted away, just replace them with another handful. This way you know that your roses are being watered enough during their dormant phase.

This is a time to use dormant oil spray or lime sulphur to kill any fungus or insect eggs in the canes or on the ground.

MARCH

Remove winter protection sometime between March 17 and April 1st. If you used rose collars, March 17th is usually a good time to remove them and let the soil or mulch start to fall away from the canes. A gradual removal of your insulating material (mulch) allows the roses to adjust to the up and down temperatures of March. If we have a deep snow on the ground, you will have to wait until you can find the rose collars.

Pruning – Best time is when the Forsythia is in bloom in your garden. Don't have a Forsythia, look in your neighbors yard. Cut healthy canes back to 12-18 inches, eliminating twiggy growth and dead canes. All cuts pencil size or larger should be sealed with Elmer's glue or nail polish to prevent cane borers from eating your plants.

Plant – Plant bare root roses March thru April where they will get no less than a half day of sunlight. Prepare the hole at least 18" wide and deep. Soil must be well drained and high in organic material, so you may need to add some items to it. One recommendation is 1/3 soil from the hole, 1/3 peat moss, and 1/3 compost. The bud union, (where the rose is grafted onto the root stock. It looks like a big lump) should be planted about 2 inches below the soil level in our area to help protect it from freezing. After planting, mound the soil about 1 foot deep over the plant. When foliage appears, carefully remove the mounded soil from around the plant.

Clean Beds – a must for healthy roses. Remove any old twigs, dead plants, etc.

Fertilize. Use a 10-10-10 mix of a granular fertilizer. DO NOT use liquid fertilizer at this time. You can use it later in the season.

Cleanup Spray. Spray with a fungicide/insecticide combination. Be sure to spray the soil around the rose bush.

Usually all steps are completed by April 15th.

Special note! If we have a dry winter, you may need to water after you fertilize.

APRIL

Spray – As soon as plants start leafing out begin a regular spraying program for diseases. You should spray every 7-10 days to prevent blackspot and powdery mildew. You can purchase fungicides at garden shops or in many home improvement warehouses. Read the label and use

a fungicide that says it is safe for roses on the label. Please make sure that you follow ALL instructions and safety warnings on the label of the product. Some products have a "drying" time before you should allow children or pets back into the area. Use an insecticide only when you have a problem, or they will also kill the "good" insects. You can use combination sprays that do both diseases and insects. A spreader sticker or a teaspoon of dishwashing liquid per gallon of water can be added to the mixture to help the spray material adhere to the foliage. You should avoid spraying between 9 am and 6 pm and if your roses are stressed, otherwise you may burn the foliage. **Rose Midge** – If you have good foliage and no blooms, rose midge is probably the culprit. Look for blackened stem tips where a tiny bud should emerge or blind growth, both are signs of rose midge. Use a spray that specifically says that it kills midge.

Water—Roses need at least 1 inch of water per week (2-4 gallons depending on plant size). A few things to keep in mind when watering: Do it in early morning, on a regular basis (at least once or twice a week during dry conditions), and in a deep and soaking manner. You should avoid watering in the evening because the cool damp conditions can be a breeding ground for blackspot and other fungus.

Feeding – Fertilize with rose food or a 10-10-10 granular. Follow label directions. You can also scatter ¼ to 1/3 cup of Epsom salts (magnesium sulphate) around each rose bush (not miniatures). You can also use generous handfuls of alfalfa pellets or alfalfa meal. New roses and miniature roses like fish emulsion. Use 2 tablespoons of fish emulsion per gallon of water and repeat in two weeks.

Mulch – Add 2" layer of mulch to preserve moisture and keeps roots cooler, help control weeds, and improve the appearance of your rose garden. You should use bark mulch, wood chips, or leaf mulch. Don't use peat moss which will compact and shed water. Colored mulches should be avoided. It is believed that mulches that are dyed red, blue, green, etc. when applied to the ground will result in nutrient starvation of shallow rooted woody species, herbaceous perennials, annuals and newly planted landscapes. Colored mulches should only be used around well established deep rooted species, for walking paths, or play areas. Also, use caution if using Cocoa Bean Hulls for mulch. Remember that chocolate can be poisonous to pets.

MAY

Fertilize, water, and spray. After mother's day, plant potted roses in prepared soil. Follow directions listed above under March for planting. After May 20th, remove spent blooms before the petals fall off. Cut the stem back to at least the first multi-leaflet (should have 5 small leaves on it) leaf below the bloom which points towards the outside of the plant. This is called Deadheading. Deadheading will encourage new and strong growth needed for the next cycle of bloom. Depending on the height of the rose bush, you can cut down to the second or third five-leaf leaflet. Also, remove all short growth on the lower third of the bush. This helps cut down or eliminates spider mites.

JUNE

Fertilize, water, spray, cultivate and deadhead. Apply a water soluble 20-20-20 fertilizer like Miracle Gro or other plant food for roses.

JULY

Fertilize, water, spray, cultivate and deadhead. Apply a water soluble 20-20-20 fertilizer like Miracle Gro or other plant food for roses. Prune June blooming climbing roses. Cut unwanted and old woody canes on which blooms were produced in June, being careful not to prune new, young shoots which will produce next year's blooms. You may need to spray for Japanese Beetles. You can pick them off and put them in a jar of soapy water to kill them.

AUGUST

Fertilize, water, spray, cultivate and deadhead. **Do not** use water soluble fertilizer after August 30th. This helps to slow down the plant's new growth to prepare for the coming cold weather.

SEPTEMBER

Fertilize, water, spray, cultivate and deadhead. Remember cool nights and warm days will increase our chances for powdery mildew. Around September 15th, stop all fertilizing and stop deadheading. Start to remove decaying petals and continue your weekly spray program.

OCTOBER

Water, spray, and cultivate. It is too early to winter protect and the roses should not be pruned at this time of the year. Pruning now would only encourage new growth that will be too soft to survive our winters. Two things that you should be doing in October are weekly spraying and removing decaying petals. Allow the rose hips to form. These are the little round seed balls that form when the rose petals have fallen off. This will slow the growth of your plants and help prepare them to go dormant.

NOVEMBER

Do not let roses go into winter dry! Water them well. Avoid fall pruning. If the bush has very long canes, now is the time to trim them back to 2 ½ - 3 feet in length to avoid wind and snow damage. Now is the time to give some serious consideration to winterizing your roses. Consider winterizing your roses. There are many methods and thoughts about winterizing. Read as much as you can and do what will work best for you in your garden. Some people do not winterize at all. Most people in this area mound up the plants with soil or with mulch. If you use mulch, you may need to use something to prevent it from "blowing" away. Some people use "rose cones" or newspaper stapled together around the base of the plant to form what is called a "collar". The main purpose for winterizing is to keep the bud union from freezing and to provide a constant temperature for the plant so it will remain dormant and get it's much needed rest. The best time to winterize is after we have had 2 or 3 consecutive nights in which the temperatures fall below 32 degrees.

Winterizing:

Miniatures – Minimal pruning, clean beds, spray, and cover. They are more winter hardy because they are on their own root.

Climbers – Don't prune. Clean, spray, and tie long canes. Pile soil over the bud union.

Old Garden Roses – Don't prune. Clean, and cover with a little mulch.

If you have more questions or need specialized help, please visit our website and email one of the Consulting Rosarians. They will be very happy to assist you with your questions so that you can enjoy your roses for years to come. You can also visit the American Rose Society's website at www.ars.org for more information.