



Shenandoah Rose Society

Shenandoah Rose Ramblings

A Society of the Colonial District

Chartered by the American Rose Society

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Serving the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and beyond



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November Meeting

The November meeting of the Shenandoah Rose Society will be our end of the year banquet held Sunday, Nov. 9, 1 p.m. at Christ Lutheran Church fellowship hall in Staunton. The meal will be catered by the Fellowship & Hospitality Committee of the church. The cost will be \$15 per person. Please send your payment to Meredith Yeago, 2926 Hermitage Rd., Waynesboro, VA 22980 by November 2nd to confirm your reservations.

Dues Time

It is time to renew your dues for 2009. Dues are still \$12. You may pay them at the banquet or send them to Meredith. Please consider renewing your dues. This is about the only operating funds the Society has and we are trying to keep the dues at that level. We do make some extra when we host a District meeting, but we have the expense of the newsletter, dues to the ARS and the District, and a few other things we do along with the website. It doesn't take long to deplete the dues and we have to fall back on reserves. Please consider renewing.

Shenandoah Website

www.shenandoahrosesociety.org

Our website is in its second year and is attracting more traffic all the time. It is a good informational tool and if you miss receiving a copy of the newsletter or want to look at a back issue, it can be downloaded from our website.

The website is not free. The cost of keeping it going is \$119 per year. Last year, it was paid for by sponsor ads but this year only two of the sponsors have renewed. If you know a garden center or

business that would like to put a sponsor ad on our website, the cost to them is \$20 for a year. Please let me know (Charles Shaner) if you know someone that would like to do this.

A New Development with Rose Rosette Disease

By Charles Shaner

Rose rosette disease probably the most devastating disease to hit our roses. I believe everyone in the Shenandoah Rose Society has had at least one case of rose rosette, a viral disease that is contagious and has no cure.

It is now thought RRD can be spread from one bush to another through the root system in the ground. It can be spread on your pruners and on your hands from one bush to another. A few years ago I did infect another bush when unknowingly pruned an infected bush before I pruned that one. It is important to sanitize your pruners. A spray can of unscented Lysol® will do this very well.

Last year, there was an article published in our newsletter written by Al Minutolo about the use of aspirin in your spray. The basics of the article said that aspirin would enhance the natural immune system of the plant making it more resistant to diseases. After that article was published, I started using aspirin in my spray every week at the rate of 2 tablets per gallon.

Last year, I did not have a single case of RRD in my garden. This spring I got a little lax on my spraying and one bush developed RRD. I pruned out the infected canes and immediately got back into my spray program using aspirin. The

canes left on that bush are growing and blooming as normal.

Yes, the RRD did get down to the root system. One infected basil break did appear which I removed and no others have appeared.

I have sent this information to Virginia Tech and as I told them, this is a very early observation. It needs more research and study but it is showing early potential. Sometimes the most difficult of problems have the simplest of answers and hopefully this is one. It would be nice to be able to tell our roses to "take two aspirin and call me in the morning".

Aspirin takes some time to dissolve in water so I take a drink bottle and fill it with water. I mix two gallons of spray at a time, so I drop four aspirin tablets in the bottle of water and let it set for a week. When I prepare my sprayer, I dump that solution in the sprayer and immediately prepare another aspirin solution for next week's spraying. I use the cheapest brand I can find. I got a bottle from Costco of the large dosage and use two tablets per gallon. I have not had any problems in it mixing with my regular sprays.

As I said, this is a very early observation but wouldn't it be great if the answer to RRD was this simple.

The Rambling Rosarian

It is time to make preparations for putting your roses to bed. I have had many people ask me when they could prune back their roses. It is too early for that at present. You want to wait until we have a good, hard frost before you prune. You do not want new growth and with the warm days we are still having, new growth is exactly what you will get. I am still cutting blooms although the growth has slowed up. You definitely want to stop dead heading if you haven't already.

For your fall pruning, you want to take the canes back to about 30 inches--just enough to keep the winter wind from rocking the roots loose. I have many bushes this year that are not 30 inches so I am not going to do anything with them. If you use rose cones for winter protection, cut the bushes back just far enough to fit under the cones.

Continue your weekly spray program as long as we have warm weather. There are many little critters still out there and this is prime weather for powdery mildew and blackspot. I finally got rid of my aphids by using a combination of Good

Health Rose + (an organic) and Malathion together at half strength.

Watering is still important. Roses always need water even if it is dry in the winter and we do not have sufficient rainfall or snow. You should have already stopped your feeding program especially if you are using chemical rose foods. With organics, it doesn't matter. Once the ground temperature drops the organics will stop breaking down. Any organics you put down now will just lay there until spring.

If you do not use rose cones and want to put on a little winter protection, you can get mulch (pine bark, etc.) and pile it up over the base of your roses. This will protect the crown from the winter elements. In the spring, you just spread the mulch out. You have, somewhat, protected your roses and mulched them at the same time.

Most of us like to put our sprayer and tools away for the winter but I am not opposed to getting the sprayer out occasionally during the winter months (especially on a warm day) and spraying with an oil spray, and I might even mix in a little lime sulfur. This takes care of the critters that like to winter over in your canes and any winter fungus.

The SRS Store

Our inventory in the SRS Store keeps growing. We have several items available at a good price to our members.

Mills Magic Rose Mix--20 lb. bag--member price \$17, non-member \$20; Contact Raymond Shaner 540-248-2301

Messenger--Mix for 1 gallon--member price \$2, non-member \$3; Contact Charles Shaner 540-294-2875

Master Rosarian

Charles Shaner Staunton 540-294-2875

SRS Consulting Rosarians

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Preparing the Roses for Winter

By Meredith Yeago

Now is time to be giving our roses fall care to help them survive with as little damage as possible from the cold temperatures and relentless winds of winter. Our goal should be to help the plants harden the canes for winter. Soft and tender growth will not survive and will have to be pruned out during spring pruning.

First, modify the plant feeding program. No more nitrogen-containing plant food until early next spring. Some growers apply a quarter cup of super phosphate and a quarter cup of super potash in October to help harden the canes for winter.

Second, some growers stop deadheading in early October to direct the plant's energy into forming the seed hips instead of new growth.

Third, some growers stop the watering program in mid-October letting the drier beds help harden the canes growth in preparation for winter.

One of the most frequently asked questions is, "When do I cut my roses back for winter?" Some gardeners are used to cutting down marigolds and zinnias and cleaning up the flower beds in general and feel that they should do the same for the roses. The answer is--you don't, except in limited circumstances.

After the first hard freeze, usually about 25°, and after all of the tender growth has been damaged, most growers cut the tall canes back to approximately waist high or 30 to 36 inches. This is to prevent the winter winds from rocking the roots loose causing damage to the plants' root system. A lot of good rose varieties do not like to be cut back any farther than necessary by winter kill. Also, the leaves remain on some plants most of the winter providing shade for the canes on those cold days when the warm sun partially thaws the frozen cane. This partial thawing causes great damage to the cane.

The recent mild winters here in the Valley making previous winter protection unnecessary.

Some growers still place some of the tender varieties such as *Color Magic* and new plants under rose cones. Also, if there are exposed bud unions, it may be a good plan to cover the union with a few inches of soil or mulch for the winter.

It is not a good plan to apply new mulch to the whole bed in the fall as it invites voles (short-tail field mice) to set up their winter quarters in the bed and feed on the rose plants. Many a plant has been lost to voles.

Growing pretty roses is far from being an exact science. It usually boils down to a philosophy of a lot of Rosarians--do whatever works for you. That is what I do. Rosarians generally freely give growing advice. I adopt what I can use.

Our Season Year Has Ended!

It seems to me our growing season gets shorter every year. Wasn't it just a few weeks ago that I did my spring pruning? Where did it go?

Another season has ended and with that, so does our newsletter for the year. We do not have meetings in December and January and I also take a break from the newsletter for those months.

Our slate of officers for 2009 will be as follows:

President – Charles Shaner
Vice President – vacant at present
Secretary – Sondra Shaner
Treasurer – Meredith Yeago
Corresponding Secretary – Polly Holston

I am looking for ways to improve the Society and attract more people to meetings. One mention has been our programs. I am looking for new ideas for programs dealing with roses. Bringing in outside speakers is expensive, especially when they have to drive for two, three or even four or five hours to get here. That just isn't worth it for a ½ hour to 45 minute program. Meeting day is another problem. I am looking for ideas. Please give me some!

Charles Shaner