



Shenandoah Rose Society

A Society of the Colonial District

Chartered by the American Rose Society

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Serving the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and beyond

On the web www.shenandoahrosesociety.org



March Meeting

The March meeting of the Shenandoah Rose Society will be held Sunday, March 8, at 2 p.m. at the Big Dipper Ice Cream Shop, 2215 N. Augusta St., Staunton. The program will be "*Jump Starting Your Roses for Spring*" given by Charles Shaner. This program will include pre-spring spraying, pruning and feeding.

Pre-Spring Meeting

The Pre-Spring Colonial District meeting is being held in Staunton hosted jointly by Tidewater and Virginia Peninsula Rose Societies. All members of the District are encouraged to attend. The pre-spring meetings are highly educational and a great place to gain new ideas in caring for your roses.

If you have signed up to attend, I will see you there. If you have not, there is still time but get your registration in now. You may contact me for a registration form or one may be downloaded from the district web site www.colonialdistrictroses.org.

Dues

The majority of our members have renewed their dues for 2009 but a few have not. This is a last call for 2009 dues. If we do not receive a renewal from you by March 20 you will be removed from our mailing list. Your membership is important. Dues are the only income the Society has. The newsletter cost and website cost come primarily from your dues. If you have not renewed, please consider doing so.

From the President

Today's economy does not make it easy to grow roses. Like everything else, the price of roses and supplies keeps going up. I received a rose catalog this past month and quickly put it down when I saw the prices in it. New varieties are going for \$21.95 and the older varieties are going for what we paid for new ones just a few years ago. This does not include the shipping you have to pay.

Even the "bag" roses which we encourage people not to buy have taken a substantial price increase. A friend of mine purchased one of these in February from Wal-Mart for \$6.00. They were, at one time, \$2.00. He brought it by for me to see. It was a *John F. Kennedy* and was very impressive. It had large canes, was in a good-sized package and was showing good new growth. He was going to pot it and keep it in an area where it would not freeze until April.

If you are looking for newer varieties, the pre-spring meeting may be an answer. Vern Rickard of Almost Heaven Roses will be there selling roses and they are very reasonably priced. You may also purchase from him on the web www.almostheavenroses.com or call 704.732.4787. He will bring them to you at the pre-spring meeting and save shipping. These are own root roses and are small but they grow very well.

Rose foods are another item to look at. Most have now gone to organics. We order in the Mills Magic for sale to the members at cost. Manures may be found for free from many farmers.

One reason many have turned away from the chemical fertilizers is because of environmental concerns and the salt content in them. The salt builds up in the soil and is harmful. Dry chemical fertilizers are mostly fillers and not much actual fertilizer. I blend my own organic rose food but that is also getting expensive.

Looking for alternatives to save money is the way of today's economy. One good way to find the alternatives is attending the district meeting and talking with other rosarians. Find out what they are doing and adapt it to your situation. I have learned many "tricks of the trade" this way and discovered ways to do my rose task faster and more efficient.

Saving water is an important one for all of us whether you are on a city system or private. I have a strong well but still use conservation methods. I like going from bush to bush with an open-end garden hose. Fifteen or twenty seconds of water from an open-end garden hose puts one gallon of water at the base of the plant. No water is wasted

and it all goes where I want it. I do not get the foliage wet which cuts down on the possibility of black spot.

Some of the organic sprays cost less and do a good job. Neem Oil is one of them. It is inexpensive, does a good job and is environmental friendly.

Look for the alternatives to save time and money. Growing better roses for less can be accomplished with the right methods and products.

Charles

The Season Ahead?

By Charles Shaner

We always try to speculate on what the season will be like. Regardless of how hard we try, no one's crystal ball seems to work properly. We can only work with what Mother Nature deal us.

January and February have been cold and dry. If that is an indicator, we will have a cool dry summer--or will it be hot and wet? There is no historical record to compare winter weather in relation to summer weather. There is nothing constant about it.

With the dry, cold winter we have had watering is needed--or is it? I recently pulled a stake out of the ground which went down about 18 inches. Water was almost dripping from it when I pulled it out. I have heard some say freezing will bring moisture to the top of the ground. That must be true because we have not had rain or snow.

Watering, even in the dormant season, is necessary if we have not had the proper precipitation. The proper moisture will help keep your rose healthy.

Spraying is another item to take care of. Now is the time to apply a dormant spray. Lime sulfur should be applied and I will mix the oil in with it. This gets rid of many pests that winter over in your roses and will help with the spring fungus such as canker, blackspot and some even fight a little powdery mildew in the spring.

One prediction I can make is the Japanese beetle. The number of beetles we have one year is affected by the weather conditions from the previous summer and winter. If we have a hot, dry summer there will be fewer beetles the following season. The beetles will not be able to get into the ground deep enough to properly lay their eggs. A cold winter will cause the grubs to freeze leaving fewer beetles for the coming season.

Most people in our area had fewer beetles than normal last year and that, combined with the cold winter we have had, should produce fewer beetles this year.

There are some things you can do that will help with the beetle situation. A couple of years ago, I put down Milky Spore. It sounds expensive to start with but considering it last for 15 years, it was an inexpensive investment. It is easy to put down and a little goes a long way. I have noticed a reduction in the number of beetles I have.

Last year I planted red geraniums in with my roses. This also seemed to help. The geranium is a poison to the beetles and the beetles seem to go to them first. As a test, I planted them next to my *Dainty Bess* which the beetles love. As a result, I had very few beetles on my *Dainty Bess*. This is an inexpensive way to added more color to your garden and aid in the control of Japanese beetle at the same time.

I can also predict the better care you give your roses the better blooms you will have. Roses love plenty of TLC and the more they get the better they like it.

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