

Shenandoah Rose Ramblings



Shenandoah Rose Society

A Society of the Colonial District
Chartered by the American Rose Society

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November Meeting

The November meeting of the Shenandoah Rose Society will be a "Dutch treat" lunch at Rowe's on Sunday, November 16, 1 p.m. Please let me know if you plan to attend:

540-294-2875 or
clshaner@mindspring.com
by November 12th.



From the President

Our year has come to an end. We have had a good season. We hosted the Pre-Spring meeting and had many good meetings but we were unable to get an exhibition in because of a lack of a place to have it. I am pleased with the year we have had. I know I have harped much about attendance, but at the same time I understand many of our members can no longer travel to a meeting, especially at night. There will be another year and I hope everyone will renew their membership.

We will be hosting the District Pre-Spring meeting in March 2014. There will be a tight schedule putting this together which means we may need to have a planning meeting in December. We need to have everything finalized and information ready for the *Courier* by the end of January. I already have one speaker for either Friday night or Saturday night.

Everyone is looking for ways to save money and the Rose Society is no different. At present about half of our members receive the newsletter by e-mail and half the snail mail. With postage going up, we need to send as many as possible by e-mail. If you have e-mail and are not receiving our newsletter that way, please let me know (clshaner@mindspring.com) and I will get you on the e-mail list. Many societies have gone totally electronic on their newsletter but I don't think we are ready for that.

Charles R. Shoner



Time to Renew

It is time to renew your dues for 2014. They are still \$12 which includes husband and wife. It is important for us to hold on to our members and gain a few along the way. Please consider renewing your dues and invite a friend.

A suggestion as a gift for that friend you don't know what to give--how about a membership to the Rose Society? If the friend enjoys roses, it would be a gift they would enjoy along with increasing our membership. Growing roses can be addictive. If you can get a friend interested, it just might catch on. Give a Society membership to a friend for Christmas and I will make a card on my computer for you to give them.

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Rambling Rosarian

By Charles Shaner

Where did the summer go? It seems like I just did my spring pruning and now it's time to put them to bed for winter. This is something many people get in too big of a hurry to do. The roses aren't going anywhere. Their growth has stopped but they are not ready to be pruned back for winter. We need to wait about another month to do the fall cutback. This is the biggest question I get in the fall--when and how much?

The "when" depends on where you live. In my area it would be sometime after the first of December. You want them to be pretty much dormant before you cut them back. That means they have lost most of their leaves. The "how much" depends on the amount of growth they put on during the summer. You want to end up with bushes about waist high (30 inches). This is primarily to keep the winter wind from rocking the roots loose.

If you use a large amount of chemical fertilizers during the growing season, you may want to give your roses a feeding of triple phosphate, which will help to slow down the growth for winter. This is optional and not many use this practice at present.

I used mainly organic feedings during the season. At this time of year, I have cut out the chemical portion of my feeding and have continued with the organics, feeding only once a week instead of twice. This gives the plant a little something to eat during the winter and is not a big promoter of growth. My father always believed in feeding organics to his hayfields in the winter months for a good spring crop. He must have been right for he always had a good hay crop. He did the same with his vegetable garden and yard. The winter rains and snow would take the organics deeper into the ground. I had the best vegetable garden this year I have ever had, and I believe it was because I covered it with organics during the winter.

It may be time to put them to bed, but it is also time to be planning for next year. Now is the time to be deciding what you want to add to your garden next spring. If you are ordering from the catalogs, your roses will arrive in early spring. One thing to remember: if you live west of the Blue Ridge Mountains you will want your order to be shipped to arrive after the first of April. If not, you will get it around the 15th of March. This happened to me one year and it was 19 degrees with snow flying. The roses were bare root and I had to quickly pot them for planting later. If you live east of the Blue Ridge, the 15th of March may work well.

Fall came suddenly for our roses. I was still cutting blooms around the first of October and that was the end of that. By October 20 we already had morning temperatures of 28 and 27 degrees. Growth had stopped by October 10. I didn't have powdery mildew to speak of this year and the same for blackspot. Japanese beetles were few but there were a few aphids in the early fall. I didn't see much in the way of thrips or other insects. I have ladybugs everywhere I look.

Now that there isn't much to do in the roses it is time for other chores like cleaning off the vegetable garden, cutting firewood, and changing the tractor over from summer grass mowing to winter snow pushing. I watch the squirrels gathering their winter stash and they have really been working hard. I am not sure what this means. There isn't much of an acorn crop so the deer and bears are coming down out of the mountains looking for food. We have a large deer population in my area to start with, but you see them everywhere. Bears are being seen in places where they've never been seen before. If you go by the "old timer's predictions" this means a light winter. But I have also heard predictions the other way.

No matter which way it goes, spring will come and that will bring another growing season. We will start all over again with the old challenges and, more than likely, some new ones. We will meet the challenges; fight the insects, deer, and elements; and end up with some beautiful roses trying to remember what it was we did last year that worked so well.

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And Now for the Deer

By Charles Shaner

Summer may be over but the deer are still with us and in force. Food is scarce in the mountains and they are in the Valley and City looking for food. They have cleaned up the crown vetch which they love and are now looking other places such as your roses.



I looked out my window one morning and one was munching on my *Fourth of July* in my back yard. She wasn't anxious to leave when I walked out, either. Further down in the yard I could see two or three more. They are so hungry they will eat almost anything.

I tried Tiki torches filled with ammonia during the summer but they don't seem to be working now. They munched on the roses right beside the torches. There are so many of them around it is difficult to find a control. It is only going to get worse as we get further into winter. There isn't much in the way of acorns for them to eat and no food to speak of in the mountains, so they are looking in our yards for food.

Electric fences work. I have one around my vegetable garden and it kept them out all summer. I have a single curly wire about three feet off the ground. All I am using for a charger is what is recommended for pets (dogs and cats), which puts about 185 volts on the wire. There is no amperage--just voltage so it doesn't hurt them. I have gotten against it a couple of times and it just feels like a bee sting.

I don't intend to keep my fence up all winter, but if the deer become more of a pest I may have to do something. The deer population around me is getting larger and needs to be thinned out. Deer steaks may be the menu for Thanksgiving.



Master Rosarians

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