

Shenandoah Rose Ramblings



Shenandoah Rose Society

A Society of the Colonial District
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February Meeting

The February meeting of Shenandoah Rose Society will be held Thursday, February 20, 7 p.m. at Christ Lutheran Church. This is our last meeting before the District Pre-Spring meeting and we will do the final planning.

In Memorium

Rachael Hollis



From the President

Winter decided to hit us big time in January. It was the coldest January overall I can ever remember. How our roses survived still remains to be seen. The quality of care you gave your roses last season will determine greatly how well they survived.

Many of our members have renewed their membership. If you have not renewed, please do so. We are a small society and every member is important and counts. Our membership has held a little better than many. Some societies are starting to show some increase in membership. I hope we will be able to boast the same.

We will be hosting the Pre-Spring District meeting in March. As the host society we should have the best attendance of all the societies present. We still have some planning to do and there are some jobs to be done during the weekend. I am still looking for one or two speakers but we do have a good line-up with some interesting topics which include "*Gardens of North America*" and "*Flight 93 Remember Me Rose Garden*". Barbara Shaner will once again be catering the event. I hope you will plan to attend.

The District business meeting will be Saturday evening. The award for the *Outstanding Consulting Rosarian of 2013* will be presented at this meeting. Matters of the District will be voted on and your vote is important.

Charles R. Shaner



Crock Pot Hot Bed

Ever wonder what to do with that old crock pot instead of tossing it out? Why not use the pot and top as a mini hot bed? You can start a few garden seeds such as tomatoes, peppers, etc., or even try your hand at starting a few rose cuttings. Just fill the pot about 3/4 full of potting soil and use the lid as the hot bed cover. A stick may be placed under the lid to give it a little air.



Inside this issue:

- From the President 1
- Crock Pot Hot Bed 1
- Rambling Rosarian 2
- Thoughts of Spring 3
- Master Rosarians 3
- Consulting Rosarians 3

Shenandoah Rose Ramblings

Rambling Rosarian

By Charles Shaner

I burn a wood stove for heat. The farm next door has Texas Longhorns and he wants all the cherry trees taken out. He lets me cut them for firewood to get rid of them. All it cost me to heat my house is gas for the saw and the time to cut the wood. I try to have enough cut a year ahead of time to do the next winter. With the weather we have had this winter I am very lucky not to have a heating bill. If you have ever heated with wood you will know there is no better heat.

I don't know how the roses are going to survive but they usually make it fairly well. Roses are a little more hardy than most people give them credit for. As I write this on a Sunday afternoon in February it is 61°—a big change from the 15° a week ago and the mornings of -2° and -4°. The wood stove got a break today.



February is a month full of surprises. We never know which way the weather is going to go. It could be cold and snowing one day and warm the next. February is also a time to spray your roses with a dormant spray such as oil/lime sulfur. This will get rid of many little critters which like to winter over in your roses. I also recommend a spraying in February with a good fungicide such as Mancozeb. You need to spray the ground as well as the plants. On one of those nice February days, give your roses that dormant spraying. I did this last year and I could tell a big difference in my roses during the growing season.



Take an inventory of your gardening supplies, especially checking your sprays. Sprays have a shelf life of three years if unopened, but once opened that drops to two years. I have already stocked up on my sprays for the season but still need to purchase one more. Stores in my area are now stocking for the spring gardening season which makes it a good time to buy. Check your tools. Do your pruners need to be sharpened, or you may want to look to purchase better.

As soon as the weather permits, do a pH check on your beds. Your pH should be about 6.5 but it may have drifted off. It doesn't matter what kind of mulch you use--it will change your pH. I hear many arguments as to which mulch is best, but it really doesn't matter. All organics, as they decompose, produce acid—some just more than others.



If you are planning to add new roses, now is the time to plan where to put them. If you are planning to add a new bed, one of these warm days is a good time to go out and lay it out. Spring is coming: be ready for it.

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Thoughts of Spring

by Charles Shaner

Probably the hardest thing to do in the middle of winter is to think of what to write about roses. I can only dream about what I want to do. I know I want to build a new rose bed. My wife wants her own bed for minis. She got the bug at the fall meeting and show in Martinsville when she helped Diana Klassy with her roses.

Barbara has picked out some new minis she would like to order and I have rooted some cuttings for her. I plan to build her a raised bed near the house so she won't have far to go and be easier to care for. I will need about a pickup load of top soil to make the raised bed. I already have the timbers to build the frame.

I have several roses in pots in my greenhouse to plant for myself. I have some spaces in my beds and I built a small bed last year with nothing in it. I think I have enough roses to fill the beds. I will probably pick up a few more at the pre-spring meeting.

I have already purchased most of my sprays for the season. I kept my barrel of liquid food going all winter and it is ready as soon as the weather will permit me to start feeding. I also have a supply of alfalfa meal and fish meal to add in the barrel. I found that Tractor Supply has alfalfa meal much cheaper than Farm Bureau.

Weed control starts very early. I prefer the two-finger method of "grab on and pull". Many of you may know that the patent has expired on RoundUp. I found a product called *Ultra Kill* at Lowe's which is the exact same chemical and at 1/4 the price if you take into account it is a higher concentrate and mixes more spray.

It is difficult to think about planting and caring for roses when the temperatures are near zero and you are looking at snow. Those days stuck inside are a good time to dream about those beautiful blooms you will have and what you need to get them. Planning now will give you better blooms when the weather is hot and you are wishing for some of the cool we are having now.

Thanks Diana, for giving me more work!



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