

Shenandoah Rose Ramblings



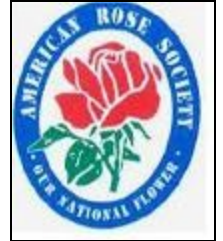
Shenandoah Rose Society

A Society of the Colonial District

Chartered by the American Rose Society

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April Seminar

The April seminar will be held Sunday, April 8, 2:30 at the home of Charles and Barbara Shaner, 93 Shaner Lane Staunton. Pruning seminar

From the President

Hopefully winter is over with and we can start enjoying some better weather. Spring brings hope of a renewed life and an awaking from a long sleep. We look forward to putting our roses to bed in the fall and equally as well looking forward to those beautiful blooms in the spring.

Our Pre-Spring meeting and seminars were a success even with the low attendance. I have not heard a single complaint about the weekend. Thanks to Diana Klassy furnishing most of the items for the raffle and silent auction, we made a little money on the weekend. You receive information and ideas for growing your roses from these weekends you cannot get at a local society meeting, on the internet or in newsletters.

I will be attending the National Mini Convention in Jacksonville, FL the first weekend of May. I will be attending the ARS Board of Directors meeting on Thursday and return home on Saturday. It is an expensive weekend but thankfully the District is helping me with expenses.

At present we do not have anyone to host the fall meeting and show. I have faith something will develop on that. All societies are experiencing the same problem and that is with aging members. Just as we prune our roses to keep them renewed, we need new members to keep our society renewed. This is where it is import for all societies to build their membership.

How can you help with membership? We all know someone who is growing a couple of rose bushes and are not members of a society. Talk to them and see if you can get them to join. Each new member receives a four month free membership in the ARS. New members are the life blood of the society.

I had to cancel the seminar for March due to the fact I was called into work plus the weather was not favorable for a pruning seminar outside. We will try that seminar again Sunday, April 8th at the home of Charles and Barbara Shaner, 93 Shaner Lane, Staunton, VA at 2:30 P.M. This will be an outside meeting weather permitting. If bad weather we will again reschedule.

Charles R. Shaner



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Shenandoah Rose Ramblings

The Rambling Rosarian

by Charles Shaner

Just as we think winter is coming to an end it decides to have one last blow, or was it? I have been enjoying a few warm days and I have started my spring pruning. My roses took a pretty good beating from winter and I know I have lost some but don't know how many. The next few weeks will tell the story.

The one thing I hate to see in the spring is those awful black canes from the winter damage. There seems to be an over abundance of them this year causing a heavier pruning than normal. The roses will usually come back as long as you do not prune below the graft.

One of the problems bringing on heavy winter damage that causes us to lose roses is we are not planting them deep enough. I have several in that category and those are the ones I believe are lost. In our area you need to plant them with the graft right at ground level if not an inch or two below. Planting them with the graft just a little below makes it easier to protect the graft with mulch as winter protection. The old style of protection was to cover the plant several inches up with soil and that would work well. In the spring you just pull the soil back. You will find the part of the cane under the soil will be green and alive.



I noticed all of my mulch decomposed over the winter. I usually add a couple of inches in the spring and that will need to be done. I visit a nearby horse stable where it is free for the taking. The horse stables use popular sawdust because it will not cause the horse's hooves to split. They clean the stables every day and pile it up outside. It is about 80% sawdust and 20% horse manure. As I put it on the rose beds I will mix some lime with it. This keeps my PH in check.

I will occasionally check the PH to see where it is. An inexpensive meter may be purchased from Lowe's or any garden center. They are not completely accurate but are good enough for what we are doing. You are looking for a PH of 6.5 but anything from 6.0 to 6.8 is good. I have seen roses do fairly well on a PH as low as 5.5. If PH gets to low or to high the nutrients will get locked up in the soil and not available to the plant. Meters are available in a wide range of prices and quality.

It is about time to start feed. If you use organic rose foods you can start feeding anytime as it takes them longer to kick in. They also last about six weeks. I would hold off until about mid April to apply chemical rose foods as they go to work instantly but only last two weeks. You do not want to put on too much growth too early. We can still have freezing weather until about mid April and frost until mid May.

Watering is an ongoing thing. Anytime, summer or winter, we do not have sufficient rain fall you need to water. Roses are heavy drinkers but they like well drained soil and do not like wet feet.

That only leaves spraying. You probably will not need to spray until after the first of May. One school of thought is not to spray until you see insects or fungus. I like preventative spraying and spray every week. Many of the sprays say to repeat spraying every 14 days but I have found the insects returning after about seven or eight days. You will also find a statement on the label that says "ever 14 days or as needed". The old saying may apply here "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". It is easier to prevent an infestation than it is to get rid of one.

Give your roses proper care and they will reward you with beautiful blooms.



Shenandoah Rose Ramblings

Who Has The Correct Information

I get newsletters for all across the nation and there is as much a variety of information on how to do something as there are newsletters. Who is right? I find the people in different areas of the nation are doing similar things but in a different way and on a different timeline.

I have heard many people say “why should I join a rose society when I can get all the information free off the internet?”. This is simple. You may be looking at information posted by someone in Maine or Florida and that doesn’t apply to Virginia.

An old rule of thumb is to start your spring pruning when the forsythia blooms. I have seen forsythia bloom in January if we had a few warm days so that does not work. If you read newsletters from southern California or Florida, they are doing spring pruning in January or February. That would not work in Virginia.

Soil conditions are different around the Nation and even in different areas of Virginia. A good example, in Augusta County we have problems with PH dropping and we need to use lime to bring it up. Low PH indicates acid soil. Just north of us in Rockingham County there has been problems with PH going above 7.0 which indicates an alkaline soil. In that cast you need sulfur to bring it down.

Different areas of the Nation also have different insect problems some of which we are fortunate not to have them in this area. The Japanese Beetle was once just on the East coast but now the West coast is blessed with them. Only a few western states have not been infected with them.

All of this information is good but make sure you get the correct information for your area. You would not need to treat for chili thrips when we do not have them in this area. At the same time the western states that do not have Japanese Beetles would not need to put down Milky Spore. Southern California and Florida would not need to use winter protection.

If you are unsure if the information you are reading is good for you to use, check first. Using the wrong information could cause damage to your roses.



Master Rosarians

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