



Digging It!

May, 2012

Coming up Roses

The secret to growing beautiful roses is proper care and attention.



Roses need lots of moisture to perform well especially when they until they are well established. Lack of water will cause the plants stress and make the bushes susceptible to pests and diseases. I suggest a soaker hose as the water is applied slowly and does not run off. The water should soak down 12 inches.

Mulching your roses will slow down evaporation and leave soil and roots cooler in summer. Once the soil warms up in the spring, spread a 3 inch layer of mulch over the rose beds keeping it away from the base of the bushes to facilitate watering. Shredded leaves, mushroom compost or bark can be used. Mulches can use up soil nitrogen as they decompose, so it is better to use material that is already well composted.

Roses put a lot of energy into flower production. So, it is important that they get the proper

food care. The simplest way to do this is to give the plant regular feedings of a good organic rose food. Add a good dressing of composted manure twice a year, once in the spring after pruning and another in the summer after the first bloom flush is over. Stop fertilizing after early August. Other tips include adding five millilitres of Epsom Salts per litre of water to your fertilizer in Spring and mid-Summer –Epsom Salts contain magnesium, an essential element of chlorophyll, the sun-light capturing compound found in rose leaves, which encourages the production of basal breaks and improve blooms. Fish emulsion is another excellent organic method to stimulate budding and blooming, as well as greening up the leaves.

Pruning your rose bush will not only encourage healthy growth spurts but keep your plant looking aesthetically pleasing. Removing dead twigs and wilted blooms provides more space for the entire plant to absorb water, air and sunlight. Late winter to early spring is the best time to prune most roses –just before the bushes break dormancy.



Pests such as aphids, whiteflies or sawflies can be controlled with the use of organic or

synthetic pesticides, eliminating by hand or companion planting with garlic. It is also, useful to reduce the amount of nitrogen applied to the plant.

Black spot is the common rose fungus that occurs most often in warm and humid weather. The black spot on the leaves progresses to yellow and eventually the leaf falls off. Applying an anti-fungal spray and soap during the rose plant's dormant season in the spring should prevent black spot fungus from growing when the temperature heats up. If your roses are growing in shady moist areas with poor air circulation, you may see white powdery spots on your rose leaves. Cut away dead or diseased leaves to prevent this powdery mildew from spreading. Next year spray with a fungicide at the first sign of an outbreak and continue every week or two throughout the season.

You can purchase many disease-resistant rose cultivars to help avoid black spot and powdery mildew. For information and suggestions contact the Huronia Rose Society and speak to Edna at 705-424-2179. You may also want to attend their annual rose show coming up July 7, 2012 for inspiration and lots of free advice.

Anna Sauve,

Master Gardener In Training

May TO DO List

- Begin to harden off houseplants before taking them outside
- Work compost into the ground removing weeds as you go, prepare for planting next month
- Dethatch lawn if more than 2cm (3/4") deep
- Move perennials that didn't have enough space last winter.
- Prune all late summer-flowering shrubs and old perennial growth.
- Divide perennials that bloom in mid-summer.
- Avoid walking on your lawn and garden as the ground starts to thaw. The soil is saturated with moisture and will compact very easily.
- Have a gardening question or need to identify a plant or pest, ask a Master Gardener (contact information to the right).

Tip of the Month:

Garden smart and avoid muscle injury; walk for 5 min. to increase circulation and warm up muscles. Wear supportive shoes to avoid ankle sprains. Do not work your arms above shoulder height for longer than 5 minutes- instead use a ladder or step stool to adjust your height. Use your legs to lift, not your back. Hold weight close to your body and keep your spine straight and belly in!

*Note our new name due to a conflict with another publisher.

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Editor Cherin Harris-Tuck

To Subscribe/Unsubscribe please contact therealdirt@rogers.com

Master Gardeners of Simcoe County



Where to find us for free gardening advice!

May 8, 2012 Right Plant, Right Place; Joan Nieman-Agapas, New Barrie Library, 48 Dean Avenue.

May 10, 2012, Container Gardening; Cherin Harris-Tuck, New Barrie Library, 48 Dean Avenue.

May 14, 2012 Veggies and Annuals; Clarinda Hamilton, Timely Landscaping Tips and Tricks; Rhona Desroches, TBA Kevin Van Andel Penetang, Brian Orser Hall Arena, Thompson Rd.

May 15, 2012 Master Gardener Meeting, The White Pine Boardroom 2284 Nursery Rd. Midhurst Guest Speaker Bob Bowles presenting on "Invasive Species that are Changing our Native Ecosystem"

May 15, 2012 Pesticide Free Lawn Care & Maintenance, John Crow, New Barrie Library, 48 Dean Avenue

May 22, 2012 Alliston, St. John's Church, 56 Victoria St. Alliston Greg Kalcic, John Crow, Tracy Bosley.

May 22, 2012 Cookstown Library, Carol Dunk, Integrated Pest Management

Ask a Master Gardener books containing answers to your most common gardening questions are available at any of these speaking engagements for only \$10 or Gardening Guides for only \$1. Valuable references for you or as gifts for a gardening friend!


For information on arranging a lecture for your group please contact Joan Nieman-Agapas 705-721-9088 or email her at jnabarrie@yahoo.ca. For more information on Master Gardeners, visit our website: www.mgoi.ca