

SUMMER ROSE CARE

Mesa East Valley Rose Society

The hot, dry days of summer present a challenge to our roses, as well as to us. With a few tips and techniques, they will survive; well most will survive. Don't be discouraged if you have one die, don't blame yourself but examine your horticultural care and practices and see if there are things you can improve. Don't blame yourself that doesn't bring a dead rose back to life.

The purpose of this discussion is to emphasize those things that we can do to keep our ROSES alive, healthy, and ready to grow and bloom next fall.

COMPOST and MULCH

If you have not placed compost around your roses, it's not too late, but do it soon for the important benefits during the hot summer. A number of compost material will work. Growell and Kellogs Compost and Garden/Potting mixes are readily available in nurseries and garden stores. Other mulch materials that work are pine needles, straw (you will get some weeds), or in moderate amounts and combined with other organic materials gin trash when available. Good effective mulching means maintaining at least a 2-3 inch layer of compost and mulching materials.

Compost helps moderate soil temperature but also breaks down with the heat over the summer. At the same time it provides nutrients and conditions that enrich the soil for survival and growth of roses. Very importantly compost and mulches insulate the soil keeping the roots cooler and the soil more evenly moist and the evaporation rates down. Compost and mulching materials also help us control weeds.

FERTILIZER

It is important to water roses before fertilizing so they are fully hydrated prior to and after applying either liquid or dry fertilizer. Use either liquid or dry slow release fertilizer at $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ the recommended rate once a month during the hot summer months. Resume the normal or recommended rates in September and October for the fall bloom. It is important to keep the soil active with light applications of fertilizer so rose bushes and soils do not become nutrient deficient. Do not use heavy rates of fertilizer that result in rapid growth in the summer. It is very easy to over fertilize this is a case that a little more is not better.

WATER

Roses need adequate water and do not tolerate or survive dry soil conditions. Even a few hours of the soil being dry with high temperatures can cause burning of the foliage or weaken a rose bush making it susceptible to disease and death. Roses often do not show wilting or water stress at the time they are in stress like many other plants. Several days or a week later when the leaves dry and branches die back you know you have stressed the plant. By then it is too late.

Using various irrigations systems soils can be dry because of insufficient watering time or the frequency between watering days. This applies whether the roses are planted in the ground or in pots. If you are using or depend on a timed irrigation system, check it regularly for the quantity of water that is being delivered with the set application time as well as the frequency between applications. With prolonged hot days add an extra watering cycle to help plants survive and cope with the heat. To determine if the watering time is adequate check the soil moisture level around your roses about 24 hours after watering, if the soil is dry increase the time for that area.

In soils that have normal drainage it is almost impossible to water too much. But there does need to be an interval of one to two days between watering for air to move into the soil so soil and plants can have oxygen which is a macronutrient. Don't turn the irrigation controller off after rains, use that extra moisture to improve the overall soil moisture levels and very importantly leach accumulated salts to a lower level in the soil.

Roses in pots require frequent watering as temperatures rise or there are hot winds. This frequent watering also leaches nutrients that must be replaced to keep plants healthy. Replace nutrients with applications every one or two weeks and at half the strength on directions but with the reduced strength the frequency can be increased.

INSECTS and DISEASES

Insects and diseases for the most part disappear with the high temperatures of summer. Powdery Mildew doesn't survive the high day and night time temperatures. Going into the summer and heat, spider mites (not an insect but a tiny spider) can be present. As the summer gets hotter mites usually reduce in numbers or even disappear. These little pests are very tiny and look like grains of sand on the backs (underside) of rose leaves or a pencil dot that moves on a sheet of white paper.

Control of diseases and mites during the summer is easiest with a strong spray of water. Using high velocity small stream spray, spray both the top and from underneath side of the leaves to clean the dust and remove the mites. Washing rose bushes at least once or even two times a week will help, reduce your sedentary lifestyle, possibly

improving your health and for roses reduce insect and disease problems. This should be considered a win-win activity.

Leaf cutter bees are native and all around us leaving their tell-tale signs that they have visited with little quarter inch circles in the leaves of favored rose bushes. These are beneficial native insects, insecticides are not effective on them. They are also important pollinizing insects. So just enjoy the roses.

DEADHEADING

Some people choose not to deadhead during the summer and miss the light exercise and contact with their roses. Most of us like to deadhead roses lightly during the summer, making it easier for the September pruning and sets the stage for the fall blooming season. Deadheading also should be done to remove rose hips conserving energy for new growth rather than seeds. If you choose to save some of the hips for seeds, let them mature and see what new roses grow from them. They will be different from the parent it is growing on and the parent that furnished the pollen. ARS has a group of members that work to develop new varieties. This is a whole subject area for those interested in the ARS Hybridizers Group.

MOST IMPORTANTLY TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Taking care of your roses in the summer can and should be fun and educational but it also requires that good common sense be used. Tips to enjoy and stay safe:

- Work in your garden early in the morning using proper tools.
- Wear long pants and long sleeved shirts and covered shoes (swim suits don't give skin protection and sandals do not protect feet from dropped pruners).
- Use sun screen anytime that you are outside. Wear a broad brimmed hat.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after you are out in the garden. Keep yourself hydrated.
- Get a tetanus shot if it has been at least **TEN YEARS** since your last one. Growing roses you are working in soil, so keep this immunization current.

PROBLEMS OR ROSE QUESTIONS

Rose problems you need advice you may call an American Rose Society, Master or Consulting Rosarian from our Mesa East Valley Rose Society for advice and help. They

are trained and want to help you enjoy your roses. Please also use the MEVERS web page or Face page to ask questions. <http://roses4az-mevrs.org/> Face Book: Mesa East Valley Rose Society

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