

Shenandoah Rose Ramblings

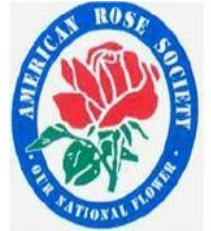


Shenandoah Rose Society

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

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June Meeting

The June meeting of Shenandoah Rose Society will be held Thursday June 20, 7 p.m. at Christ Lutheran Church. The program will be "What It Takes To Show Roses"



From the President

When did we have Spring? Seems to me like we went from cool weather to very hot! My roses bloomed about two weeks early this year and the blooms do not hold long in the heat. The last part of May has been dry and watering started early this season.

We had a good turnout at the Rose Days at Milmount Greenhouses. I thank the members who attended for their support. We had more people in the seminars than in the past expressing more interest. There seems to always be one in every group and this one didn't agree with what I said. This one didn't like my method of watering, saying the only way to water roses is with a drip system. She also said you cannot root cuttings because they will go back to root stock if you do. I am sorry but I don't understand. Maybe roses grow different where she comes from. I do not believe this lady has ever been in a rose society.

Attending local society meetings and district meetings gives you the knowledge you need to grow beautiful roses. Learning the proper way and methods is the key to growing roses. There is more than one way to water, spray, and feed your roses. You develop methods that work best for you.

Attend meetings, learn the proper ways, and amaze your friends and neighbors with beautiful roses. You will find friends you didn't know you had.

Charles R. Shaner



Organic Pest Controls

By Charles Shaner

There seems to be more and more push toward the use of organics in insect, disease control, and fertilizers. The EPA is getting more into the picture all the time. Virginia has a special concern with most of the state being in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. As was in an article in the May newsletter, a change is coming to fertilizers being used in Virginia in 2014.

I am using more organics all the time and finding new ideas of how to control pests without the use of chemicals. Many of these work very well and are easy as well as inexpensive to use. I would like to share with you a few I am using and some new ideas which have come my way.

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Shenandoah Rose Ramblings



For control of aphids - Several years ago I had Japanese beetles I could not control. I do not like to use Sevin in my garden because it kills the beneficial insects as well as the bad boys. I finally broke down and brought out the Sevin. It did the job on the beetles but for a few years after I could not control aphids. Nothing would seem to touch the infestation. I was at a local greenhouse and they had a bag of 1,000 ladybugs for \$10. I purchased a bag and released them in my garden. I have not had an aphid problem since. I may see just a few on one leaf but they are gone by the next day. The ladybugs feed on aphids, and I am now seeing ladybugs everywhere. This is a good example of where a chemical controls one thing but causes a problem in another area.

For control of Japanese Beetles – The Japanese beetle has been a problem in Virginia for as long as I can remember. There are many chemicals on the market which will control them and some work very well. Beetle traps were widely used at one time but they attract beetles to them. The Japanese beetle is very clumsy. He has to hit the trap just right to fall into the jar or bag and be trapped. If not, he may end up on your roses or plants where he is not wanted. As is said, the best place for a beetle trap is in the neighbor's yard. Milky Spore is a product made by St. Gabriel's Lab in Orange, VA. The milky spore is a virus which infects and kills the beetle. The powder you purchase is nothing more than Japanese beetle grubs which have been infected with the virus, dried and ground into a powder. It took great convincing to get me to apply this to my lawn but it really works. It sounds a little expensive at first, but you must consider you only apply it once every 10 to 15 years and it is easy to apply.



Another control the Japanese beetle is *red geraniums*. Only the red works. The red geranium is poison to the Japanese beetle and the beetle loves it. I put this to the test. I have two *Dainty Bess* planted in two different beds. I planted a red geranium beside one and not the other. The one with the geranium was not bothered by the Japanese beetle while the other one was infested with them.



For control of thrips and other small insects – You have seen me write articles on the use of blue plastic cups and STP Oil Treatment along with others in newsletters across the nation. This really works! I put up new cups coated with oil treatment on a Sunday afternoon. By Monday afternoon there were numerous insects on all the cups. I used new cups because the ones from last year need to be replaced. I just wash the cups off when they get coated with insects and recoat them. Neem oil also works well.

For control of fungus – Regular spraying is required for fungal control whether you use chemical or organic. Neem oil works well but has a tendency to weaken toward the end of the growing season. Spraying with lime/sulfur in the winter months will aid in control for the growing season. Remember to spray the ground as well and the plants.

For deer control – There are several things that work for deer and what you use will depend on where you live. I use an electric fence around my vegetable garden and it keeps the deer out. I am in a rural area so there are no restrictions on fences. I have a dog in the area where my roses are and she keeps the deer away from them. A new twist told to me by a professional exterminator I am trying is as follows. Fill tiki torches with ammonia and place them around the garden. With ammonia you do not light them. The fragrance of the ammonia will keep the deer away. The more wick you pull out the more fragrance they put out. Cotton balls soaked in ammonia and thrown around in the flower bed will also keep out cats and small animals.



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Shenandoah Rose Ramblings



For control of groundhogs – Groundhogs are a big problem in Virginia especially to farmers. Cattle will step in the holes and break a leg and farm equipment will be damaged when hitting the hole. Groundhogs will eat almost everything in a vegetable garden. For me a solution has been trapping them and killing them or shooting them. My cousin lives next to me and we took care of 52 of these pests in one summer just around our property.

Now, this may sound very cruel, and I have not tried it, but my exterminator friend told me if you mix equal parts of corn meal and cement powder together, place a cup of this nest to their hole, the groundhog will eat it. Talking about being bound up! Nothing like having your insides cemented together.

For fertilizing your roses – I do not know if we can go totally organic on this but I am almost there. I have a friend with a horse farm. He puts poplar sawdust in the stables and cleans them every day. I get truck loads from him just for the taking and use it as mulch on my rose beds. It serves the purpose of mulching and feeding all at the same time. Also, I have a 65-gallon plastic barrel which I fill with water. I then put in organics such as alfalfa meal, fish meal, dehydrated manures, etc. I will also put in fish emulsion and even fresh fish if I have them. I fixed this up with a siphon hose when I first set it up. I will draw off enough to feed 16 oz. of this to my roses twice a week and add in one tablespoon per gallon of Miracle-Gro. Twice a month I will add in a tablespoon per gallon of Epsom salts. I will refill the barrel with water each time and add the organics as needed. I keep the barrel going year round.

These are just a few things I have found that work or have potential. I hope you can find something which will aid you in your gardening.



Rambling Rosarian

By Charles Shaner

With all the knowledge I have obtained about roses there are still things I don't understand. How is it that two people can do things the same way and come up with different results? I know there are still variables between the two, but why should that make such a difference?

I have had many people look at my roses and say they wanted to grow roses like mine. At the same time, I go to shows and say I would like to grow roses like those. I feed, water, and spray and my roses still don't look like the ones I see in the shows. I even paid the preacher last week and that didn't help.

The variables we face make a big difference. Soil conditions vary from one area to another along with climate conditions. In my own yard the soil conditions are different in the front yard from the back yard. I very quickly discovered this when I ran a perk test for a septic system. What would be the front yard would perk while the back would not. Guess where I am growing roses—in the back! I did not want to put my rose beds over top of my septic lines. This is one good reason for going to raised beds. I built a frame 10 inches high and filled it with good top soil. This was enough to give me the drainage I needed and I could control the type of soil I was using.

This brought on the need for watering in dry weather. I have tried about every type of watering system including building my own. I did not care for any of them. The drip system emitters have a very small orifice

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and I was always having trouble with them stopping up. Soaker hoses are not for me. They will put out an excess of water in one area and little to none in another. I built my own system using 1/2 inch plastic pipe and drilling a 1/32 inch hole at each rose bush. I still had problems with the holes stopping up. Then there was the problem of how long to run it. I either got too much water or too little. The answer for me was to go from bush to bush with an open-ended garden hose (no nozzle) and putting 15 seconds of water at the base of each bush. Fifteen seconds of water from a garden hose is equal to one gallon of water on the average.

Then comes the problem of feeding. There are about as many feeding programs as there are rosarians. Each has his own way to feed and what to feed. Most of these ways are good as long as they get the nutrients in the ground the roses need. But this brings up another item of interest—your soil pH. If your pH is off, it doesn't matter what kind of fertilizer you use or how you apply it, your roses will not be able to take it up. There are many types of pH meters on the market with a wide range of prices. Obviously, the higher types of meters carry a higher price. I use the inexpensive ones. They are not 100% accurate but are close enough. You want to keep your pH around 6.5. If it goes above 7.0 or below 6.0, you need to take the appropriate action to correct it. Strange as it may seem, one of my rose beds had a pH problem where the upper half of the bed dropped drastically while the lower half was right on target.

Now that my roses are growing there comes the problem of spraying for insect and disease control. This also comes with a wide range of prices. First needed is a good sprayer. I do not like the plastic ones. They seem to always be causing problems and do not last long. I purchased a *Chapin* a few years ago from the Farm Bureau. This sprayer is made of coated steel and replacement parts are available. It is a two-gallon pump-up sprayer which works very well for me. Sprays are another item. Do I purchase the \$150 a pint ones or the \$15 a quart ones? I don't have \$150 to put out on a bottle of spray so I purchase the \$15 ones. If used properly, they are just as effective. I also add two, 325 mg aspirin tablets per gallon of spray. This enhances the natural immune system of the plant. One trick I was taught by a representative of Bayer was to always use untreated water for my sprays. Treated water tends to kill the chemical action of the sprays. I noticed a big difference in my sprays when I started doing this. Spray weekly and according to directions on the package.

Try different methods and use the one which works best for you. Find ways to do the same thing better and faster. Attending meetings and seminars will give you great ideas to try on your roses. I have gotten many great ideas and modified them to fit my situation. Try it for yourself. You just may find something that will work.



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