

Shenandoah Rose Ramblings



Shenandoah Rose Society

A Society of the Colonial District

Chartered by the American Rose Society

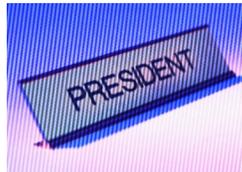
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March Meeting

The March meeting of Shenandoah Rose Society will be the Colonial District Pre-spring meeting to be held in Staunton March 14-15. Please plan to attend. We are the host society. If you have not registered, there is still time to do so.



From the President

Hopefully our hard part of winter is over and we can get down to some serious thought toward spring rose work. We have fought snow, cold, ice, mud and rain. I wanted to get out and cut firewood but the weather just hasn't been in favor. It seems if we do get a warm day the wind is blowing and I can't drop trees with high wind.

We can still think about building up the Rose Society. I hear of several societies that are now growing in membership and that is a positive note. Keeping our membership up is what keeps us alive.

We will have a project coming up around the end of April or first part of May. Christ Lutheran Church, where we hold many of our meetings, is taking out the trees in the center islands. I have made a proposal that the islands be filled with Knock Out roses. The congregation and council have agreed to this. The roses would be purchased with memorial donations in memory of a loved one from Milmount Greenhouses at a cost of \$22.95 each. They will be in three gallon pot and about 18 inches tall. Shenandoah will help with and supervise the planting. To do the center island properly it will take approximately 40 bushes.

Society members are welcome to give bushes as a memorial. Just send your check to Christ Lutheran Church, 2807 N. Augusta Street, Staunton, VA 24401. Mark your check "Rose Bush" and specify who the memorial is for. All donations will be listed in the bulletin on All Saints Sunday.

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Charles R. Shover



Snowstorm indicators...



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Shenandoah Rose Ramblings

Rambling Rosarian

By Charles Shaner

I have been wanting to do a winter spraying on my roses but Mother Nature has had different ideas. It has been crazy. One Wednesday it is 19 degrees and snowing, the next it is 60 degrees and sunshine but the wind is blowing. Then it turns cold again. I think Mother Nature has her bonnet tied too tight! The weather will get better and we will soon be growing roses again.



I will do my dormant spraying as soon as there is a day suitable. I believe this is one of the most important sprayings of the season. It gets rid of many pests that like to winter over in our roses. Spraying this time of year with a good fungicide will also decrease the amount of blackspot, powdery mildew, and downy mildew you will have during the growing season. This was very helpful to me last season.

Many in our area get a little anxious to start pruning on the first warm day we have. I do not start my pruning until after the first of April. You must remember that pruning encourages growth and you don't want to do that too early. Spring pruning mainly entails taking out any dead or diseased canes. On hybrid teas you will want to take the good canes back to about 18 inches. I have had many times when I couldn't get much height at all because of winter die back. Sometimes it looked like I went down the rose beds with a lawn mower, but they did come out and produce beautiful blooms.

Many will be looking at the nurseries for new varieties. It is a very good idea to purchase roses from a well-known source. Beware of the inexpensive varieties at discount stores and especially the packaged roses. I purchased some of these last year and several did not survive. In the past I have even got some that weren't what they were marked. I was unable to determine what I got but it wasn't what I bought.

The prime planting time in our area is from the first of April until the end of May. If you want to move some bushes, this is the prime time to do it. Bare-root roses need to be planted in this time period along with anything you want to move. This will allow the bush to develop a good root structure before fall. Potted roses may be planted anytime.

People are always making predictions as to how the coming growing season will be. This is just like trying to predict the weather which isn't much more than an educated guess. I look out the window and it is raining and I guess it is going to rain. We all make fun of the weather people and I keep saying I need to quit my job and become a weatherman. I would make a lot more money and I don't have to be right.



I can make one of these educated guesses for the coming season. My prediction is for the Japanese beetle and this seems to follow a pattern. You can predict the beetle infestation by what the weather was the past season and how harsh the winter was. In my area, we had a light crop of beetles last year. The last part of the summer was dry and that made the ground hard so the beetle couldn't get very deep to lay its eggs. We have had a cold, harsh winter which means the beetle grubs were shallow in the ground and many of them froze out and died. My prediction is for a light infestation of beetles this year.

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Where Are We Going?

By Charles Shaner

It seems trying to make plans these days is a very difficult thing to do. You have a date for an activity which has always been on that date and all of a sudden it doesn't suit anyone. You remember that old billboard sign, "*Plan Ahead!*"? Many of us fail to do that when setting up an activity. That seems to be the problem in planning our District meetings along with other activities.

We have had the District pre-spring meeting around March 15 for at least the past 20+ years. Now that doesn't seem to suit people because of other activities. If you move the date, then it doesn't suit others. I have had suggestions of moving it to February because March doesn't suit one group. I have suggestions to move it to April because March doesn't suit another group. Then there is the problem of the weather which we can't predict.

The fall meeting has the same problem. The growing season of the District is so varied it is hard to schedule a District show that suits everyone. There is a month difference in the season between Tidewater/Northern Virginia verses the Shenandoah Valley and West Virginia. If we hold the show mid-September it is too early for one group, and if we hold it mid-October it is too late for the other group.

At one time none of these problems mattered and people attended the District meetings. The first one we hosted in March 2000 had an attendance of 135. Now we are lucky if we have an attendance of 45. The figures for the fall meeting are about the same.

Then there is the weather. The group was once snowed in from a storm in March in Maryland. Some wanted the pre-spring meeting in February this year. Do I need to remind you what the weather was like in February? If you were to move it to April, it is no longer a pre-spring and is in the middle of everyone's spring work.

This is a dilemma which may be debated for a long time with no real solution outside of people marking their calendar for the District meetings to be held on a certain weekend each year and "*Plan Ahead!*" for that weekend. The fate of the District depends on it.



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