

# Shenandoah Rose Ramblings



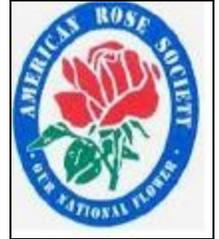
## *Shenandoah Rose Society*

A Society of the Colonial District

Chartered by the American Rose Society

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### Monthly Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of Shenandoah Rose Society will be held Sunday, June 21, 2015, at Christ Lutheran Church, 2807 N. Augusta Street, Staunton. The program will be "Care During the Heat of Summer".



### From the President

There are times when a simple task becomes difficult. It would seem this is that time for me. You write so many articles month after month and you feel all has been covered and where do I go from here? Then there is something that comes along which sparks an idea.

This is a month I will be traveling to Columbus, Ohio, for an American Rose Society Board of Directors meeting. This is a year for the triennial elections. As you may know I am running for District Director unopposed so there is no vote to be taken. We are also voting for ARS Vice President and there is also a resolution for a bylaws change for the ARS. I encourage you to vote. If you vote online you have a unique voting number on the May/June issue of the American Rose.

The bylaws change in a nutshell. The bylaws say in order to become Vice President and President of the ARS you must have served at least one term as a District Director or Regional Director. The change would eliminate that and say anyone who has been a member of the ARS for three consecutive years could run for ARS Vice President/President. I will not encourage your vote or give my feelings but I do encourage you to vote.

Last fall I issued a challenge to the District and also to Shenandoah Society. That challenge was for each member to bring in one new member in 2015. I now have two to my credit. How are you doing? Each new member will receive four month free membership in the ARS.

We had a very large turnout of interested people at Milmount Green Houses. Many applications were given out. I just hope a few of them come back in. There is much interest in growing roses and it is our responsibility to spread the work and help people with their rose problems. Talk roses to your friends and share a rose with them.

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## The Rambling Rosarian

By Charles Shaner

One question I was asked several times at Milmount was how I got started in roses? That was about 25 years ago and I can still remember the struggles I had in getting started. If there was anything that could be done wrong I did it and I think I even invented a few. Learning how to do it was the key. I have been asked how to start a rose garden so I thought I would share my two-cents' worth on how to do it.

If you want to start a rose garden the first step is to pick a location. This is not just a simple matter of walking out in the yard and saying, "I want it there". Location is very important. First thing to consider is roses need full sunlight or a minimum of six hours per day.

Next would be to design your garden. The design will vary according to the space available and your taste. Remember in your design you need to space your roses far enough apart to have good air flow and be able to get around them to work with them properly. Deciding what roses you want to grow may be included in this step. The hybrid teas are the most popular but grandifloras and floribundas may also be included in this group. The miniature roses are also popular but many miniature varieties can get as large (bush size) as hybrid teas. Climbing roses are popular among many, but they need a trellises to grow on.

Next would be soil conditions. This is a very critical factor. I am fighting everything you are not supposed to have with roses (i.e., red clay, shale, and limestone). The answer for me was to go to raised beds. Remember roses like plenty of moisture but they do not like wet feet. Good drainage is very important. I built a frame out of pressure-treated lumber and raised the beds up ten inches. Then came the task of filling the frame with soil. It would have been much too expensive to go to the garden center and purchase top soil for as much as I needed, so I called a local excavator and purchased a dump truckload of sifted top soil. If you go this route, you want to overfill your frame about ten percent to allow for it to settle.

There are many benefits to raised beds. Just a few would include better control of soil conditions, easier to maintain, better drainage, and it seems as you get older the further away the ground gets. It saves on the back.

Now you have your beds prepared and it is time for the roses. By now you should have some idea of what you want to get so you head out to the garden center. You may have already ordered them from a supplier. You want good quality plants to start your garden. The garden center is your best choice for a beginner. Stay away from discount stores, farm supply places, etc., to purchase rose bushes. Especially shy away from packaged roses. The roots have been cut off of packaged roses and that is how they get them in those little packages, plus you are not guaranteed what they are marked is what you are getting.

The next step is to plant your roses. A frequent question I am asked is, "How deep do I plant them?". The answer for the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia is to plant them to where the crown or graft is just above the ground surface. This will add a little winter hardiness to your plant.

After you have your roses planted you will need to add mulch to your bed. There have been arguments all over the spectrum as to what kind to use. Remember, no matter what type of mulch you use it is all organic. As organics break down they produce acids. Acids reduce pH so lime will occasionally have to be applied. You want to keep your pH between 6.0 and 6.5. Both pine bark mulch or hardwood mulch can be purchased from garden centers and both are good. I visit the horse stable. What I get is 80% poplar sawdust and 20% horse manure. This does great because it mulches and feeds at the same time and the best part is—it is free for the taking. I always dust it with a little lime when applying and this seems to keep my pH in balance.

Take the time to do it right the first time and you won't have the frustration and expense of having to do it a second time. A little work in the beginning will save a lot of work and expense in the end. Happy Rose Growing!

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## Pest Management

By Charles Shaner

I have heard just about every trick in the book to controlling pests, some of which work, some have limited results, and some just don't work at all. I have tried just about all of them and invented some of my own with the same results.

One was to hang Downy dryer sheets on your roses to repel insects—didn't work. Another was to put ammonia in tike torches to repel deer—didn't work. Hanging hair in socks to repel deer—limited success. Electric fence to discourage deer—works if put up correctly. Hanging blue plastic cups coated with STP oil treatment on a post for insect control—works.



One I am experimenting with this year is with moth balls. Get a plastic 1/2 pint container with a lid. Drill 1/8 inch holes 1/4 inch up from the bottom all the way around and the same 1/4 inch down from the top. Put about a dozen moth balls in the container with the lid tightly shut and set the containers around in your rose bed. So far the deer have not bothered the roses. I have seen them come within about 30 feet of the rose bed and then turn away. I want to see how it does the rest of the season.

A regular spray program is your best bet for insect and disease control. I am not going to give a long list of sprays to use. Go to the store and look at the sprays. Choose one that is intended for the problem you have and spray according to directions. I am partial to the Bayer products. Ortho also produces a good line of sprays for roses.

Always mix your sprays according to directions. More is not better and you can get in legal trouble for mixing sprays heavily. Several years ago the Bayer representative gave me a piece of advice the I tried and now do all the time when mixing my sprays. He said not to use treated water to mix your sprays, not even water that has been treated by a water softener. Treated water tends to kill the chemical action of the spray. I tried this and found I got better results from my sprays. It is better to go down to the creek and dip out water for spray than to use treated water. Rain water is also excellent. I have a water softener and I put in a hydrant that bypasses the water softener for water to mix my sprays and also water my roses. I use well water.

You find what works best by experimenting. Try the ideas of others and tailor them to your needs.



### Master Rosarians

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