

# Shenandoah Rose Ramblings



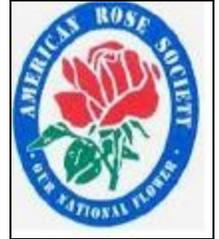
## *Shenandoah Rose Society*

A Society of the Colonial District

Chartered by the American Rose Society

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### Meeting and Seminar

There will not be a meeting and seminar in March as we just had the District Pre-Spring meeting. Our next will event will on be April 17.



### From the President

If you didn't make it to the Pre-Spring seminars held at the Holiday Inn in Staunton you missed a wonderful weekend of information and fellowship. It seems as good as you can possibly make a weekend it never comes off without a glitch of some sort. Richard Anthony was giving his talk at the banquet on Saturday night and our Power Point projector kept cutting off. It did this a couple of times earlier in the day with some other seminars but usually came back on and stayed. This projector belongs to Shenandoah Rose Society and is several years old.



Activities started on Friday evening with a seminar titled, "Growing Beautiful Roses" by me. Saturday morning seminars were "Chemical Safety" by Debbie Brown, "Rose Rosette Disease" by John Fleek, and "Building Membership" by Pam Powers. After lunch, John Smith gave a wonderful hands-on seminar on "Prepping Roses for the Show".

The business meeting was held on Saturday afternoon. A resolution was passed in the business meeting for the Pre-Spring meeting and seminars to always be held on the first weekend of March. The fall show and meeting will be held at the host society's discretion.

It seems we are having a little difficulty with attendance at our society meetings. I planned the seminar for the meeting and there was no attendance. We will try it again in April and hopefully have better luck. We are not by ourselves in this. Many other societies are cancelling activities because of dwindling membership and attendance. We must find a way to recover. Many people do not like a meeting. We only have about five minutes of a business meeting and then go into the seminar. I try to plan something educational and informative to help you grow better roses.

I will be doing some traveling this year in giving seminars. I will be going to Martinsville on April 18 and Northern Neck in December. I also plan to make several shows around the District as I am able.

*Charles R. Shover*

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# Shenandoah Rose Ramblings

## The Rambling Rosarian

By Charles Shaner

Sometimes you look back, drop your head in your hands, and say, “Why did I do it?” Barbara asked me why I ordered so many new roses and I could only reply, “My pencil slipped”. I am already receiving shipping notifications for my orders which will arrive around April 1. I sort of lost count of the orders I placed but I know there are at least three. In addition, I came home from the District weekend with eight bushes and I have 24 cuttings set in my greenhouse, of which 21 are showing good promise of becoming new bushes. This will raise my count to about 200 bushes in my garden.



Now comes the problem of what to do with them. This means building new rose beds and as most of you know I build raised beds. So to Lowe’s I go to purchase landscape timbers and rebar. I stack the landscape timbers three high, drill a hole through them at each end, and cut the rebar in 12-inch sections to use as pins to hold the timbers together. I make the beds four feet wide, which allows me to plant two

rows of roses staggered. I use 1/2-inch plastic pipe to go across the center of each 8-foot section to help stabilize the timbers.

Then there is the need for topsoil to fill in the beds. When Shenandoah Valley Electric built their office next to me several years ago, the excavators left a huge pile of top soil on the back part of the property. I stopped in the office and asked the manager about getting some of it and she said for me to help myself. It is topsoil, not top quality, but with a little amendments will work just fine.

I take my tractor and little cart along with pick and shovel to the pile, dig it out, and haul it up to the new bed. I figure about 15 cartloads will do the job. I am carrying about 1,000 pounds at a time on my cart. I guess I need to get a new pencil--one that won’t slip so easily.

I look at my roses and they are wanting to put on new growth, but I know the weather cannot be trusted this time of year so I am holding off until the first of April. All of my roses are looking good at this point and I don’t believe I am going to lose a single bush for the first time since I have been growing roses. We did have a very mild winter with a short cold snap.

I did not prune my roses back in the fall even with them being very tall. I have a lot of wind but it didn’t seem to bother them. I do not see much in the way of dieback this spring. I did spray them a few weeks ago with Mancozeb and oil. I think that really helped to fight canker. (When I typed that, I wanted to type CANCER instead of CANKER. I guess canker could be considered the cancer of roses!)

The spring work! How we look forward to it in February and by April wish we had it finished. We go about it with tender loving care. It is the birth of a new season and we must deliver the baby.



# Shenandoah Rose Ramblings

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## Spring and The Roses

By Charles Shaner

Yes, it is spring and time to dig out the garden tools. “Spring fever” affects people differently. Some are in a big hurry to get outside and start their spring too early, while others want to just get outside and enjoy the warm weather and not have much to do. Starting early could be disastrous for your plants as cold weather could still be a problem. Putting it off just doesn’t get the job done on time.

I always tell people to hold off on pruning until after the first of April in the Shenandoah Valley. If you live east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, you could start around the 15th of March. Pruning encourages growth and we don’t want growth to early and a cold spell could freeze that growth.

Feeding is another thing you want to hold off on unless you are feeding strictly organics. Chemical feedings go to work instantly. Organic feedings will lay there until the ground warms up and they go to work when the time is right. I have already given my roses a couple of organic feedings but I did not add in the chemical counter parts.

Pruning is the most misunderstood part of rose growing and one of the easiest to do. For spring pruning you simply take out the dead and diseased canes with hopes to end up with 3 to 5 canes approximately 12 inches long. This is true for all but climbers, shrubs, and OGRs. For climbers you take out any diseased and dead wood. If you have more than 5 canes, take out the oldest ones to keep you bush renewed.

Mulching is another item that needs to be done. This should wait until you have finished the spring pruning. The type of mulch you use is your choice. I like the sawdust that comes out of the house stables. It is about 80% poplar sawdust and 20% horse manure. Just remember to keep a watch on your pH. It doesn’t matter that much what kind of mulch you use. Any organic will produce acid as it breaks down. I mix a light dusting of lime in with my “horsey” mulch as I apply it and my pH stays in balance.

It is spring and time to start. Serious rosarians have been thinking about it all winter and have an itch that needs to be scratched. It is time to scratch that soil, care for the roses you have and plant new ones. Take care of them properly and enjoy the rewards with beautiful blooms.



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