

Shenandoah Rose Ramblings



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Country Girl hybridized in 1998 by Ben Williams.



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Shenandoah Rose Society

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

September 2016



From the President

I can't believe how fast our growing season has gone by. We still have about six weeks of season left, more or less, depending on Mother Nature. We must enjoy the blooms while we have them.

The activities this year for me have been a very mixed bag. I would consider the Rose Days at Milmount Greenhouses a success. We gained 12 members with the 2016 free membership program and I hope they will continue with us in 2017 with a paid membership. Our membership fee is only \$12 per year, which includes member and spouse. This is much less the many other societies. I know some societies charge an extra fee for the spouse.

I attended the ARS Board of Directors Meeting in Grantsville, PA. I must say the trip was full of mixed emotions, both happy and sad. The next board meeting in Shreveport and I will not be able to attend that one. I do not have the vacation time to take from work.

I sometimes feel I have harped too much on our own Society, but I am worried about the future of Shenandoah Rose Society. We have had seven meetings this year and, of the seven, only three had people in attendance. Four meetings no one show up for the meeting. I have thought on several occasions it was time for us to turn in our charter to the ARS and call it quits. Then, I am not a quitter. I feel as long as there is one person still interested we will continue. I am that one person. As long as I am able to water a rose there will be a Shenandoah Rose Society. I have tried different dates and different days of the week and there has been no difference.

For the August meeting I did the preparation work several days before, worked all day Saturday on it and was prepared. I even purchased some materials for the seminar. On Sunday I set the table and chairs up in the carport and had all the items and tools on display I needed for the presentation. It was a presentation that had never been done before. No one attended the meeting.

As a result, I will suspend meetings and seminars for the rest of the year unless interest is expressed in continuing with the meetings and seminars. The meeting part only takes up about 10 minutes or less of the time and the rest is the seminar. There is just too much work involved in putting a meeting and seminar together for nothing.

Please think about this and help me rebuild Shenandoah Rose Society.

Charles L. Shaw

Shenandoah Rose Ramblings

The Rambling Rosarian

By Charles Shaner

The Colonial District rose show, seminars, and business meeting will be held in Fairfax the weekend of September through October 2, and will be hosted by the Arlington Rose Foundation. I hope as many as possible can attend. I have always said if you really want to learn about roses, this is the place to be. Registration forms and information may be found on the District website www.colonialdistrictroses.org.

The growing season has been kind to us with plenty of rain and not-so-hot temperatures, but then came August. The weather turned hot and dry. It is so dry that I tilled my vegetable garden three weeks ago and the soil is still powdery loose. I see weeds curling up from lack of moisture. Watering the roses is a must.

I am still feeding my roses twice a week. As many of you know I brew my own rose food. I keep experimenting with the mix to improve it. I have a brew tank and a mix tank. For the brew tank I fill it with water and add in alfalfa meal, fish meal, and beer. Yes, that is right--BEER! The beer helps with the fermentation process and breaks down the alfalfa and fish meal faster. I noticed after adding the beer a few times the color of the brew changed and there is not as much solids coming out of the tank.

I have a 20-gallon mix tank with an agitator that I put the brew in. It takes 15 gallons for one feeding. To this I add in one tablespoon of Miracle-Gro per gallon, and a new item I now add is one tablespoon per gallon of blood meal. Twice a month, usually around the first and the fifteenth, I add in one tablespoon per gallon of Epsom salts. Each plant gets 12 oz. of this at each feeding.

There is hardly a day goes by that I am not doing something in my roses even if it is just a walk through and see what they may need. This walk will usually include some finger pruning. A weed may occasionally be pulled or I'll note what insects are paying a visit.

One thing I have noticed this season is the increased number of rabbits in my yard. Just a few years ago I didn't see rabbits at all. Now they seem to be everywhere. In the spring I even found a rabbit nest under one of my rose bushes. I have noticed the soil around my rose bushes is disturbed. This may be because of the alfalfa meal in my tea brew. Rabbits love alfalfa. They are not harming anything and I enjoy seeing them. I just wish they would find another place to raise a family.

I was looking around at Lowe's one day and found a small pump-up sprayer which holds just shy of 1/2 gallon. I purchased it for a try. I love this little sprayer. It is great for spot spraying my roses, especially just hitting the blooms for Japanese beetles. I also use it for spraying my vegetable garden. If you have a small rose garden with under 10 to 15 bushes I would recommend getting this to do your spraying. It is inexpensive at just \$6.50, has an adjustable nozzle and is easy to use. I also saw one at Walmart for \$4.95, but it was only 1 quart.



Once you get your beds built and roses planted you need to remember what it is you planted. Plant markers are available on the market which are made of zinc. You write on them with a pencil that comes with them (a china marker is better). I make my own out of aluminum. The aluminum is a heavier material and lasts longer. I can also make them for less than what they cost on the web or at garden centers. I have a Brother hand-held, battery-operated label maker that I use to make the name labels and stick them on the aluminum material. I have some that have been in the garden for over a year--winter and now two summers--and they have not faded.

Shenandoah Rose Ramblings

Rises in Raised Beds

By Charles Shaner

I started growing roses in regular beds. They did fair but I was fighting things such as poor drainage, clay, limestone, and shale. Everything you shouldn't have for roses. At a seminar somewhere I heard the mention of growing roses in raised beds and the benefits of the same. I decided to try it.



I still have the first raised bed I built, which reminds me of some mistakes I made. I thought it would be good to have the roses up where I didn't have to bend over to work with them. I discovered quickly that 20 inches was a bit too high. I thought I would never get it filled with top soil. It is convenient to work with the roses but needs extra watering.

I started building the bed frames with 2x10 pressure-treated lumber. The corners and joints were bolted together. This was time consuming and a little expensive. I have also found the lumber needs to be replaced every 10 to 15 years, which is not an easy job, plus the expense has about doubled.

The next beds were built with landscape timbers. They are less expensive, easier to work with, and easy to replace when needed. I stack the timbers three high, drill a hole through all three, and drive a pin through them and into the ground to hold them in place. The ends are staggered the width of the timbers so the corners and joints will overlap to lock in place. A pin may also be used on the corners to keep them from separating with winter freeze and thaw. I use a piece of 1/2 inch plastic pipe as a strap across the center of each 8 foot section to keep it from spreading. The strap is held in place with a nail in each end.

I have been replacing some rotted lumber which has been in for a little over 10 years with landscape timbers this summer, and some landscape timbers that have been in for about 20 years.



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