

THE PENSACOLA ROSE

AFFILIATED WITH THE AMERICAN ROSE SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2008

NOTICE OF MEETING

When: Monday February 11, 2008

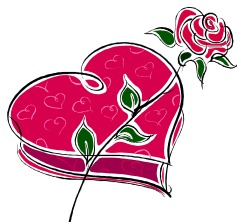
Time: 7:00 p.m.

Where: Tryon Branch Library
Corner 9th & College
Blvd.

Program: February Pruning
Spring Fertilizing

By: Merna Richards
Henry Seiler- Pruning- HT
Cindy Nooner - Pruning- OG

Refreshments: Teresa Seiler



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The holidays have come and gone and we're now into a new year! It's time to open the "Ole Tool Shed" and pull out the shovels and pruning shears. February is probably the busiest time of the year for rose growers. We are all preparing beds for planting new roses and taking time out to prune the old ones. It makes us feel like the mosquito in the nudist colony. We know what to do, but don't know where to start! They tell us we are supposed to have our beds prepared by February. However, if you are like Henry and I, with your busy schedules, combined with cold rainy days, which get dark at 5:00, you probably haven't started yet. Join the club! Having rose beds prepared on time is easier said than done. It's really no fun working with dirt when it's cold to the hands and you can't feel the warmth of the sun on your head. Besides, wearing those

thick warm clothes only impairs upper body mobility and makes digging quite a chore. What a classic case of rationalization! But it seems that we always get it done. And, looking on the bright side of things, this year we will have an extra day to get our February chores done.

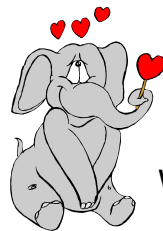
Our trip to the Deep South District Mid Winter Meeting in Valdosta turned out to be a very enjoyable experience. The trip was very pleasant and only took about 4 hours. The Tampa Rose Society did an excellent job of putting the event on. It was Faye and Wayne Sturdivant's first time attending and both found it educational and enjoyable. Merna and Bruce Richards presented programs at the consulting rosarian school on Sunday morning. At the banquet on Saturday night Glenn Schulmann was awarded the Bronze medal for his work and dedication to our society. An added feature to the workshop is the vendors who sell roses and other rose related products. The programs presented and comradery with other rosarians that share the same common interests make this event worthwhile. As Henry says, "it's like a religious revival; it gets you out of the winter doldrums and up and running for the new rose year!" I look forward to seeing everyone at the February meeting.



Teresa

JOIN THE AMERICAN ROSE SOCIETY

The American Rose Society is a wonderful organization that provides its' members with an array of information on rose horticulture. You are missing a lot of good information unless you receive the American Rose magazine. To become a member contact the American



Rose Growing in February

By
Henry Seiler

Pruning Climbers

Pruning climbers seems to strike fear into the heart of many a gardener. It's really not that difficult if you break it down into the two types of canes you will be working with. There are main canes and laterals. The main canes are exactly what they sound like, the big canes that come from the base of the plant and form the structure. The laterals are the side branches that grow off the main canes and usually bear the flowers. And while we are at it let's not call it pruning. Let's call it cleaning. Less intimidating.

First the main canes. Don't cut them... ever, ever, ever. You can tip them by up to 1/3 their length if they get too long, but don't cut them back to 2' or even 3'. They will sulk. Every 5-6 years you can cut out an old main cane to the ground that is worn out, if it gets too crowded. But that is something you do very rarely and if only need be.

The Laterals. These are the ones you will work with and it's almost impossible to make a mistake. To keep a climber tidy you want to cut the laterals back to within 14"-18" of the main cane right after they flower. I usually do when I deadhead which for me is right after the big spring flush, once more during the summer and once more right before the fall flush. This is what keeps your climber from reaching out and shredding your sweaters when you walk by. You can also do it all season long if you deadhead all the time.

So remember. Don't cut the main canes and trim the laterals as needed to keep the plant tidy... just like deadheading. See, wasn't that easy!

*(Reprinted - Ashdown Roses E-Gazette 9/5/06)
Article: Montgomery Rose Society
November 2007*



Fourth of July

Well Gulf Coast rosarians, I don't know about you but I was sure glad to see January get over. It seems that I just couldn't get motivated to work in the garden. It's the same every year. I've even tried to explain it in terms of the influence of day length on neurotransmitters in my brain. Well, whatever the reason, it felt good to wake up February 1st and turn the page on the calendar. And it felt even better when I saw that 29 at the end of February. I have one extra day to catch up on the chores I failed to do in January. February may be the shortest month of the year but it's one of the busiest months for Gulf Coast rosarians, especially for those of us who have been dormant since Thanksgiving. It's called the month of multiple chores. And it's also called the **month of romance**. The longer, brighter days of February seem to stimulate the proper neurotransmitters that cause us to shake the winter doldrums and rekindle that flame with our favorite flower. This is when we look out at our shabby bushes and picture a botanical garden by spring. And we can feel the sap rising as each day gets progressively longer and warmer.



Although February is a multiple activity month which includes digging, spraying and fertilizing, the focus of attention is always on **pruning**. This is because the middle of February is when Gulf Coast rosarians do their major pruning. Why the middle of February? Actually, the exact time to prune should be determined by two rather unpredictable factors: 1) when the bud eyes begin to swell, and 2) after the final frost of the season. Although we can closely monitor the activity of the bud eyes, we can never predict when the last frost or severe freeze will be. So, we put everything into a computer and come up with Valentine's Day. Rose lunatics like myself, who grow more than a hundred roses and who do all the pruning themselves, start a week earlier and usually finish a week or so later. You may want to start a little earlier this year and experiment a little. Start with the minis

and some of the standard varieties that you aren't particularly fond of. The minis, as well as other varieties growing on their own roots, will always bounce back if new growth is killed by a late freeze. I have about 50 minis growing in pots and can't remember ever losing one to the winter. Then start pruning the floribundas and grandifloras. As a rule, they take a little longer than the hybrid teas to bloom. Leave the HT's 'til last. Most Hybrid Tea's take an average of 60 to 65 days to bloom in the spring. If you want them to bloom at the same time, as when planning for a spring rose show, start with the heavy petaled varieties like **Uncle Joe (Toro)** and **Affirm**, and other slow blooming varieties like **Olympiad**, followed by the medium petaled varieties, which includes most of the ones we grow. Prune the light petaled varieties and other fast blooming varieties like **Kardinal** last.

Pruning equipment consists of a good pair of **gloves, pruning shears, loppers, a pruning saw**, and a sharp **knife**. I like the **Bionic Tough Pro Heavy Duty gloves**. They were invented by a renowned hand surgeon to improve overall hand comfort. The ergonomic design via motion zones and breathable web zones provides improved comfort, fit and flexibility. And the patented pre-rotated finger design promotes natural closure of the hand. And they are washable. Just don't put them in the dryer. Visit www.therosegardener.com. Make sure your pruning shears are sharp and clean. Dull blades crush the canes. Either use the time honored method to sharpen them using a honing stone or look in the yellow pages for a business that sharpens blades. I prefer the

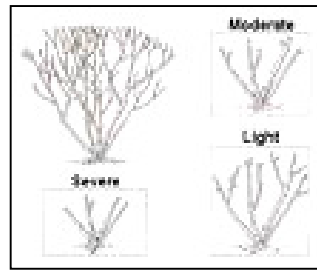
Felco model 2 pruning shears.



Felco also makes a 17 inch and 25 inch lopping shears and a 6 inch and 13 inch pruning saw. You can also purchase their sharpening stone and replaceable blades and springs.

The question every year is how much to prune. There are many guidelines for pruning but there are no iron-clad rules. In January of 1985 the mercury dipped to 11 and 5 degrees on two consecutive nights. The dieback was so severe we had to prune low, in some cases all the way to the bud union. We had no choice. But, for the last several years we have been blessed with

seasonable winters and how much we pruned has been our own decision.

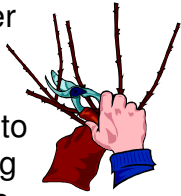


Why do we prune?

We prune to rid the bush of dead, diseased and nonproductive canes. We remove all twiggy and spindly

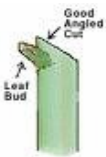
growth. We try to open up the center of the bush for good air circulation. And by removing some of the previous year's growth, we control the growth of the bush and, at the same time, stimulate new growth from the lower part of the bush and also, hopefully, from the bud union. It's like waking the bush up from a state of semi-dormancy, cleaning it up, and getting it off to a fresh new start. If you prefer many, average sized blooms, prune high. Your blooms will also come earlier when pruning high. This involves removing less than 1/3 of the bush. It is also referred to as **light pruning** and is what we recommend in the fall. Now if you prefer fewer, larger, exhibition type blooms, prune low. This involves removing more than 1/2 of the bush. In some cases it involves removing 2/3 or 3/4 of the bush and pruning it down to 12 inches. This is also known as **severe pruning**. Severe pruning also involves cutting out some of the older canes, leaving only about 3 or 4 strong canes. The bush will take longer to bloom and pruning low is harder on the rose bush. And, contrary to popular belief, it does not increase the number of basal breaks. Roses with Peace in their immediate background resent heavy pruning. Heavy pruning causes them to sulk for the rest of the year. I don't recommend severe pruning unless the bush has extensive cold damage, canker or as a last resort to stimulate new growth on a weak plant. But pruning too lightly also has its disadvantages as it discourages new strong growth. Also, floribundas, climbers, and old garden roses are not especially fond of hard pruning. Trim **floribundas** lightly and cut even less from climbers as they only bloom on last year's wood. **Climbers** and old garden roses that bloom just once in the spring should not be pruned 'til after they bloom. To increase the number of blooms on climbers, tie the canes laterally to a fence or trellis. This stimulates

flower bud formation at each bud eye. My recommendation for most healthy Hybrid Teas that have made it through the winter in good condition is **moderate pruning** where we remove about 1/2 of last year's growth, pruning to about 24 to 36 inches and leaving ALL strong, healthy canes.



Moderate pruning develops a much larger bush and is best suited to most garden roses. Whether you prune high, medium or low is usually a matter of personal preference and sometimes it seems that our roses perform in spite of what we do rather than because of it.

Some other important pruning tips are as follows: 1) **Always prune canes back to where the pith is white and healthy looking.** Dark pith indicates winter kill and will eventually die. 2) **Make sure that no canes are crossing or rubbing against other canes.** 3) It is not advisable to leave any stems that are not **at least the diameter of an average pencil.** And, 4) as hard as it is to do sometimes, **remove ALL remaining foliage leaving the bush completely naked.** We want to start the new growing season with a clean slate. Leaving any of last year's foliage gives blackspot, mildew and spider mites something on which to survive and gives these diseases a head start when the buds begin to pop. 5) **Cuts should be made on a 45 degree angle about 1/4 inch above an outside bud eye.** Some Hybrid Tea varieties are short and sprawling. In that case you may want to prune to an inside eye to keep it compact and keep it from spreading.



Many rosarians prune their floribundas this way to give them a bushy look, especially when used in landscaping. Some advocate sealing all large cuts with **Elmer's glue** or some other **pruning compound.** I no longer practice this. What about **minis**? Here's where I get carried away with the pruning shears. Some say remove half the bush and others recommend prune to 3 to 6 inches. Don't be afraid to prune hard on the minis. They love it. And you'll be thankful you did in late April when you see that beautiful new growth covered with buds. But the new **minifloras** need to be treated with a little more dignity. They don't look or grow like the

old minis. Their leaves and blooms are larger and their growth pattern is more like a miniature floribunda. So I wouldn't prune as hard on them as I would the old minis.

Immediately after pruning and 7-10 days later use a good **cleanup spray.** Spray with a fungicide and miticide at double strength. A good combination is **Banner Maxx- Daconil- Floramite** or **Compass-Manzate-Avid.** Some rosarians add an insecticide like **Merit** or **Orthene** to their cleanup spray in anticipation of the arrival of aphids. This is one time you can load up on the arsenal without damaging the foliage. There is no foliage to damage. I'll never forget the Valentines Day invasion of '86 when it seemed that every aphid in the world was in my rose bed when I went out to prune. So I sprayed that year before striping the foliage. One good spraying took care of them. After two cleanup sprays, start a weekly preventative spray program to control fungus diseases, mainly **black spot.** Use **Banner Maxx** (1/3 tsp. per gal) or **Compass** (1/4 tsp. per gal). Adding **Manzate** (1 TBS. per gal.) gives added control of black spot. **Daconil** can be used in place of **Manzate** at this time of year. Use insecticides only when insects become a problem.

So, when do we start fertilizing? I wouldn't apply any fast release fertilizer until the first of March. But this is an excellent time to add three types of slow release fertilizers to already established beds. These are **superphosphate, Osmocote** and organics. The **superphosphate** and **Osmocote** need to be applied deep into the soil around the root system. The best way to apply them is to make several holes about four inches deep around each bush about a foot from the center of the plant. Fill some holes with superphosphate (old rosarians refer to this as a **phosphate tonic**) and others with **Osmocote.** A spading fork or some other instrument may be used to make the holes. The result of this method is similar to that of "**banding**" the phosphate in the planting hole which I do when I plant a new bush. When the phosphate granules are close together, as opposed to being mixed with the soil, the granules in the center are protected by the outer ones from reacting with other soil minerals, notably iron

and aluminum, and forming insoluble salts as phosphates have a tendency to do. This makes more phosphate readily available to the roots. Applying phosphate early gives the root system an early start. **Osmocote** contains **nitrogen**, **phosphorous** and **potassium** as does most other inorganic fertilizers, but the fertilizer is coated and protected with a substance that prevents it all from releasing at the same time. This allows the minerals to be released slowly over a period of several months. The release begins as soil temperature becomes warmer. This relatively expensive fertilizer needs to be applied deep enough in the soil to prevent run-off since, unlike quick release fertilizers, it must continue to work over a long period of time.

The third fertilizer which may be applied at this time is “**organics**”. There are many different types of organic fertilizers and all are good. One which is growing in popularity is **alfalfa**. Besides providing nitrogen it has an additional chemical which helps stimulate growth. **Cottonseed meal** and **soybean meal** are also excellent as well as **blood meal**, **fish meal** and **kelp meal**. **Milorganite** provides not only the standard **N-P-K** but also **iron** and other **trace elements**. And let’s not forget “**manure**”. All types are good provided they have aged and are well composted. Fresh manure may burn. A very successful exhibitor in Alabama swears by **horse manure** and **mushroom compost** which started out, I think, as mostly **chicken manure**. I met a Georgia rosarian in Valdosta that **uses Black Hen**. Some local rosarians use **rabbit manure**. I like to mix them in a large tub and apply about 5 cups around each large established bush in the rose bed. Work it into the soil 10 or so inches from the center of the bush trying not to disturb the root system. Remember that organic fertilizers must first be broken down by soil bacteria before the nutrients are made available to the plant. To encourage the growth of soil bacteria, keep the soil aerated, well drained, and the pH between 6.0 and 6.5. Organic fertilizers provide a slow release of nutrients over a long period of time and at the same time they increase the texture and quality of the soil.



So, what else are we doing in February? It’s not too late for preparing new beds for spring planting. Remember the **recipe**?



- **10 lbs. of cow manure**
- **2 qts. of alfalfa meal**
- **1 qt. of cottonseed meal or soybean meal**
- **2 qts. of milorganite**
- **1 qt. of fish meal or kelp meal**
- **1 qt. of gypsum**
- **2 cups of bone meal**
- **2 cups of dolomite lime**
- **1 cup of minor trace elements**
- **1 cup of Osmocote slow release**
- **2 cu. ft. of soil conditioner**
- **1 cu. ft. of sphagnum peat moss**
- **1 cu. ft. of perlite**
- **1 cup of superphosphate** (*this should not be mixed with the recipe but banded or balled in a close knit at the bottom of the hole about an inch or two below the roots of the bush being planted*).

February is an excellent month for re-vitalizing those geriatric beds that have become unproductive over the years and transplanting bushes whose bud unions have sunk below the ground level. Sometimes transplanting a declining bush will rejuvenate it and give it a new lease on life. It has always been hard for me to discard a nonproductive bush. I would always dig them up and transfer them to 10 of 15 gallon pots using the very best soil preparation. And they were given extra special care in an area I called sick bay. Some went on to greatness while others died a natural death.

About the first of March, begin a monthly or bi-weekly feeding program using a complete fertilizer. The first feeding should be high in nitrogen to stimulate new growth. Also, a tablespoon or so of trace minerals is recommended. Some rosarians also apply ½ cup of urea and a handful of Epsom salts to encourage new growth from the bud union. And, about the middle of March, to give those roses the real kick in the pants and get them jumpin’, treat them to the liquid concoction that so many rosarians had such good luck with last

year. In a 32 gallon garbage can mix the following:

- 1) **2 cups of Peters 30:10:10 or 1 ½ cups of 20:20:20 and 1 cup of ammonium nitrate**
- 2) **2 cups of fish emulsion**
- 3) **2 cups of sequestrene chelated iron**
- 4) **2 cups of Epsom salts**

Apply one gallon around each large established bush and 1 quart around each mini. Be sure to water well before applying.



Getting back to February, If you hilled your roses for winter protection, use your best judgment as when to pull it down. If you used oak leaves or pine bark, spread it out and let it contribute to your mulch. If not, add some type of mulch as soon as possible as the ground warms fast in the spring. Mulch is considered a necessity in our area. **One thing for sure is that mulch conserves moisture.** With the recent increase in water rates combined with the sewer improvement fee, the city franchise fee, the sewer improvement franchise fee and the city tax, and the fact that roses are heavy drinkers, there may be an economic incentive there. It seems that we spend such little time discussing water. But, water is the most important fertilizer. Without sufficient water, the most sophisticated and expensive fertilizers could do no good, only harm.



As you can see, with pruning, spraying, applying slow release fertilizers, preparing new beds and reworking old beds, February is a busy month for Gulf Coast rosarians. So it is essential that rosarians break dormancy before the roses do. Happy Valentine's Day, Happy Leap Day, and **Happy Rose Growing in February.**

“Banding” Phosphate Makes Sense”

Edited from the Houston Rosette
Howard Walters, editor

More and more agricultural authorities are recommending “banding” phosphate rather than broadcast application. Dr. W.S. Peavy, writing in Southern Gardeners Handbook, recommends banding phosphate fertilizers for many

applications. He reports that phosphate is best applied to the soil as a band under plants rather than broadcast or mixed in the soil. The broadcast mix method is inefficient because the phosphate reacts with the soil to form non-available phosphorous compounds. Studies on tomatoes in the Rio Grande Valley showed that it took 200 pounds of phosphate per acre mixed in the soil to equal 30 pounds per acre banded. Yields were increased from 2 tons to 11 tons per acre when using the banding method.

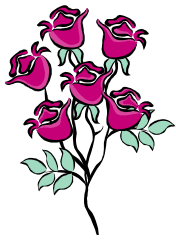
What makes banding work? To keep phosphate “alive”, active and available to the plant, the fertilizer particles must somehow be protected. One way is to make the particles stick together. Laid down in a close knit mass, the particles sacrifice some of the outer members, but the core remains somewhat protected and intact. And the concentration of phosphate is greater than the capacity of the soil to tie it up. This is the reason that a handful of super phosphate (or rock phosphate) banded two or three inches below the roots of a newly planted rose seems to do so much good. Some Florida rosarians claim that “balling” the phosphate, applying it in the form of a round ball or egg is actually more effective than applying it in a flat band.

(The above article was edited and modified by Henry Seiler)

FEBRUARY ROSE CALENDAR

- **Complete January projects; Preparing new beds; reworking beds; planting new bushes; transplanting older bushes**
- **Prune; strip foliage**
- **Begin spray program**
- **Apply organic fertilizers**
- **Apply slow release fertilizers**
- **Check pH, if too low, apply lime**
- **Begin gathering mulch**
- **Plan a monthly, biweekly or weekly fertilization program**
- **Water as needed**
- **Help recruit new members**

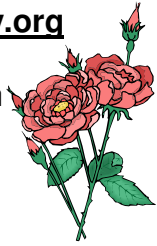




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We'll also keep you up to date on new products and new rose varieties that have won approval from other DSD rosarians and exhibitors.

Jim and Kay Harrel, Editor

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