



THE NOVUS NEWSLETTER
OF THE
THE TIDEWATER ROSE SOCIETY
MARCH 2009



“Down and Dirty With Roses”

The second meeting the of Tidewater Rose Society’s Seventy-fourth year will be held at the Norfolk Botanical Garden, Sunday at 2:30 p.m. March 15, 2009, in the Holly Room of Baker Hall.

Tidewater Rose Society 2009 Officers

President:
Peggy Scott

First Vice President:
Michael Price

Second Vice President:
Happy Anderson

Treasurer:
Patricia Wilson

Recording Secretary:
Eveline Price

Corresponding Secretary:
Claudia Green

Executive Board
*Continuing for 2nd year
Gayle Chene
Cathy Daley*
Donald Snipes
George Sutcliffe*
Diana Tase
Stephen Tase
George Wilson*
Tony Wirtz*

Immediate Past President
Howard E. Jones

COUNTRY STORE NEWS: Those of you who ordered Mills Magic, Fish Emulsion and Easy Feed, you may pick these items up at the March meeting. We will have pruners, saws, name tags and stakes also. Those of you who ordered 20-20-20, we will not have in the country store this year due to increase in price. If you still would like to have a 25 pound bag the price will be about \$65.00. We will have door prizes.

See you at the meeting

George

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

A special thanks to everyone braved the cold and helped prune the roses at our last meeting. Our board meeting got a late start and we had a few things to cover so I did not make it outside. I hope everyone learned something new. I’m glad to see Mrs. Sellers is back on her feet and was able to join us. Our Pre-Spring Meeting is the same weekend as our meeting which means we will be driving back from Staunton Sunday morning and hopefully will get through the tunnel in time for our meeting. Joe Carr, owner of Garden’s In a Flower-pot, on Little Creek Road will be our guest speaker and the title for his talk is “**Down and Dirty With Roses**”. Joe is an expert on soil and amendments and presents a great program. If you have never been to his garden shop you are missing out. Joe is famous for solving garden problems for free, something you can’t get at the big box stores. Gardens in a Flower Pot offers an array of garden ornaments, seeds, bulbs, plants, trellis”, chemicals and of course plants. Joe offers rose bushes at a savings from other nurseries. Come to the next meeting with all your garden questions and get them answered by an expert. Look forward to seeing you at the meeting and if you can, bring a friend.

Peggy

A HARDY WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS AND RETURNING MEMBER

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REFRESHMENTS FOR FEBRUARY MEETING PROVIDED BY:

Sara Jones, Peggy Scott, Margie Tully, Gayle Chene and Eve Price

TIDBIT: For members that are going to pot roses, especially mini's, I would like to pass on a recipe of Howard Jones that I call "**Howard's Witches Brew**":

2 parts real top soil
1 part crushed pine bark
1 part perlite
1 part peat moss

One cannot ask for a better potting mix. I use this not only for potting for also for amending my soil. If you want to add other ingredients to this recipe go ahead. I like to add Mushroom Compost.

Characteristics of Soil Let Nature Do It

By Randy Scott, Consulting Rosarian Woodbridge, VA

Soil is made up of varying ratios of minerals, air, water and organic material. Soil is healthy if it consists of roughly 40% mineral, 23% water, 23% air, 6% organic material and 8% living organisms.

Soil texture is concerned with the relative proportions of mineral particles of various sizes in a given soil. These particles are grouped into 3 basic categories: sand, silt and clay. Sand particles are the largest ones in soil other than gravel or other rocks. Intermediate sized particles are called silt. The very smallest particles in soil are clay.

Heavy and light are commonly used to describe soils. They refer to the ease of tillage, and not to soil weight. Heavy soils are commonly finer soils, which require more horsepower because the higher clay content makes them more sticky. Light soils have a higher percentage of sand (thus coarse textures), stick together less, and require less "muscle" to till.

The rate of water percolation is another way to describe the texture of soils. Soils percolate water at different rates. Soil should be watered only as much and as fast as the soil can absorb without runoff. Sandy soil absorbs more than two inches of water per hour as it is very porous. Loam soils absorb from 0.25 to 2 inches per hour. The soil is loose and porous but holds water quite well. Clay soil absorbs less than 0.25 inches of water per hour. Clay soil is dense with few air spaces between particles and holds water so tightly that little water is available to the plants. This very dense soil also prevents oxygen from reaching plant roots.

As if it's not enough to worry about the structure of a soil and its fertility, there are other factors that have an influence on both of these qualities and upon the type of organisms that develop in the soil. The two other factors are acidity and alkalinity, measured by pH readings, which are also necessary to consider. The breakdown, intake and utilization of minerals in plants are essentially chemical and biological reactions. Most reactions in living systems take place at a specific pH. Roses and many other plants do well when the pH is between 6.4 and 7, just a shade on the acid side. Most eastern soils are usually acidic, in many Virginia locations the pH is as low as 5.0. Although in some mountain regions there are pockets of soil that have a limestone base and can have a pH that is slightly basic. So to achieve an optimum range regular adjustment is required. A soil analysis is good to have every several years to help guide your fertilization schedule. This will also include a pH test and an organic content measurement. Lime is often added to clay soil to counter its natural acidity. As a general rule apply 5 pounds of limestone per 100 square feet. Dolomitic lime is also a favorite because it also contains magnesium. To determine the effect of the application it is wise to have a pH meter of your own to monitor the pH of your garden. Regions with high pH will need to lower it. Sulfur compounds are generally used to achieve this at a rate of 1.6 pounds per 100 square feet.

What is the best way to improve the soil in your garden? The most important thing we can do to improve the soil is to begin restoring the organic content. Most of us do not have the benefit of living on land that has remained at its natural level. In developed areas all the topsoil has been removed during the home building process leaving little more than a compact, sterile subsoil with no organic content in which to grow our roses. An organic content of 5% is considered a minimum acceptable organic content in soils. It is the organic material in the soil that provides a repository for nutrients as well as a home to many beneficial organisms that help to decompose dead organic matter, make nutrients available to plants, provide aeration, regulate moisture retention, soil temperature, and provide a system of checks and balances between the harmful and beneficial components of the soil. Most soils contain less than the minimum 5% organic matter. Since it is a proven fact that insects, weeds and diseases are much less of a problem in healthy soil, it should be obvious that amending the soil with good, organic material is a necessity.

Since soil conditioning materials and organic fertilizers are slow working in general, they should be mixed into the soil at least a month ahead of planting or transplanting. To help existing plants, organic materials may be worked into the soil between plants at any time or added as a side dressing. As the amendments decompose their benefits will be realized. You can repeat this as decomposition occurs.

What are some of the best organic soil conditioning materials? Start by establishing a compost pile. Most anything organic can be added: grass cuttings, leaves, straw, pine needles, shrub clippings and coffee grounds. Save your kitchen disposal by saving your kitchen scraps for the compost pile, but avoid any animal scraps or grease and oils that can attract pests. Almost any plant material is suitable. This provides a simple system for you to have a great garden. One of the top rose exhibitors in the country went to this system years ago. His garden consistently produces prize-winning roses using only compost and basic 5-10-5 or 10-10-10 fertilizers. Where animal manures are available, they are probably the best source of fertilizer and organic matter for the rose garden. Use manures that have been composted so any weed material will not germinate. Manures vary greatly in their content of nutrients. Their composition varies according to type, age, and condition of the animal, kind of feed used, degree of decomposition, moisture content and the amount of bedding litter. They may be as high as 4.35% N, 2% P and 2% K in some cases. Some of the

best features of animal manures are that they provide most of the micronutrients needed and help to establish biological activity from the microorganisms in the manure. Processed poultry manure is not likely to provide these microorganisms, but any composted manures such as horse, cow, sheep and poultry will.

Some non-composted amendments may not immediately affect any biological processes but may be a great amendment to change the physical character of your soil. Agricultural "Perlite", peat moss, and super fine hardwood mulch work wonders to break up clay soil. Adding sand to clay soil is generally thought to be a questionable practice. Sand combined with many of the minerals in the clay is likely to make it more like cement. Improve your roses by starting at the soil level. Give nature a little help through the use of manures and composting amendments.

POETRY & PROSE

Selected by Pat Wilson

The Coming of Spring

...the White-thorn, lovely May,
Opens her many lovely eyes listening; the Rose
Still Sleeps
None dare wake her; soon she burst her
crimson-curtain'd bed
And comes forth in the majesty of beauty...

William Blake (1757-1827)

Each rose that comes brings me greetings from
the Rose of eternal spring

Rabinndranath Tagore (1861-1941)

The following article appeared in the January/February 2009 American Rose the official magazine of the American Rose Society. (Reprinted with permission)

The Last Word...On Roses
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RELIABLE RESOLUTIONS

The famous ball at Times Square has fallen, and a New Year is with us. Let us resolve that when we make our resolutions for 2009, these will be kept with a sense of permanence. All too often the opposite action happens. To achieve the goal in any endeavor requires dedicated commitment. It is that caliber of resolve that rosarians want to demonstrate when rose-growing is involved. After all, rosarians best reflect sincerity and stability. It is for that reason that RoseDoc offers a few suggestions to ensure rose success in 2009.

First and foremost, resolve to maximize your love for roses so strongly that nothing will keep you from growing the best specimens available. If your heart is sincerely in it, the endeavor will not fail.

As we view what is best for roses, our thoughts and actions must deal with the home of the rosebush. If the soil is "tired" and depleted of organic material, resolve to correct it. Include checking the pH factor of the soil and also its drainage ability. Also, resolve to furnish adequate nutrition during the upcoming season. These factors will go a long way toward providing plant health.

Next, resolve to guard your rose garden against disease and insect invasion. The plant loves to look its loveliest, and the rosarian must commit the necessary time for protecting the bushes. Haphazard spraying will not cut it, but a spray program that provides regu-

larity will ensure the protection that is vitally needed.

Some local rose societies are experiencing diminishing interest in the hobby. In fact, some are falling by the wayside. American Rose Society cannot afford such action. It behooves every dedicated member to spring into action to prevent such behavior. Resolve to encourage members who may be considering dropping out to stay the course and become expert rose growers. With a bit of help from local rose society leaders, the organization will survive. If attendance at rose society meetings is sporadic, resolve to improve this in the New Year. Absenteeism has a way of diminishing one's interest.

One of the most enjoyable benefits of rose society activity involves the opportunity to compete with other rosarians in rose shows. Of course, this is the avenue that leads to making new friends. There is something exciting about having your rose declared a trophy winner. Everyone loves achievement and recognition. It is in rose shows that we have the opportunity to showcase our skills. Far too many rosarians fail to take advantage of this opportunity. Resolve to dismiss your timidity and exhibit your roses at the shows. Blue ribbons have a way of "hooking" a person in this hobby. It's like receiving a diploma after many hours of strenuous class work.

The American Rose Society is sorely dependent on its body of members. It is only through concerted individual participation that ARS projects enjoy success. You have read many times where RoseDoc has emphasized the need for all who grow roses to become members of the parent body. Right now is the time for joining. The benefits are numerous and far outweigh the cost of membership. ARS needs membership growth as it struggles to meet its financial requirements. In increased membership lies the answer to this problem. That being the case, resolve to join ARS, and your joy of growing roses will be enhanced because you are then a "complete" member of the national team. This will be your finest resolution for 2009.

Finally, if you have never shared your roses with others, especially the sick and shut in, resolve to do so in the New Year. It will provide the warmest feeling of all.

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“Peter Cottontail” hybridized by Bob Martin