



Shenandoah Rose Society

A Society of the Colonial District

Chartered by the American Rose Society

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Serving the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and beyond

On the web www.shenandoahrosesociety.org



March Meeting

The March meeting of Shenandoah Rose Society will be the District meeting to be held in Staunton at Christ Lutheran Church March 25 & 26. If you have not registered for the district meeting there is still time. Registration forms may be found on the district website www.colonialdistrictroses.org or contact me and I will get you one. This will be an educational meeting with a CR recertification. There will be some programs which have not been presented for some time.



From the President

I was very pleased to see the increased attendance at our February meeting. Building the society up is the goal for 2011. We need to build our membership and increase our presence in the community. Steps are already in place to accomplish this.

We normally have one rose exhibition during the year. This year we will have two, one in the spring (Saturday, June 4 at Staunton Mall) and the second in September probably at Milmount Greenhouses. As a way to raise funds for the society I am asking you to bring extra roses to the exhibition other than what you are going to show. The idea is to give people a rose for a donation to the society. This is a suggestion made at our meeting and we will give it a try.

I have also arranged for us to have the community cart at Staunton Mall for the month of May. This will require very little work. We just need to set the cart up the first of May which will take about an hour. It will need to be checked about twice a week to replace materials. We can order past issues of the ARS magazine and other items for the cart at a cost of \$15 to cover shipping and handling. Membership applications will also be on the cart.

Building the society and membership is our goal for 2011. Everyone of us knows someone who is growing roses or would like to grow roses and not a member of the society. Invite them to join or to just come to a meeting with you. They just might become a member.

Items are needed for the raffle and silent auction tables at the district meeting. If you would like to donate something (maybe that gift Aunt Gracie gave you for Christmas you don't know what to do with), or some baked goodies, let me know and I will relay the word to John Fleek. With the economy the way it is, companies are tight with their donations for prizes.

Charles R. Shaner



The Rambling Rosarian

by Charles Shaner - Master Rosarian

The joys of spring! The birds are singing, the grass is growing, the weeds are sprouting and that "honey do" list is getting larger. Spring is just around the corner. We have had some warm day but don't get excited yet. March can be a real pain. I had bare root roses delivered one year on the 15th of March and it was 19 degrees and snow flying. In the valley we normally start to our spring pruning after April 1st or later. Remember, we can have over night freezing weather in April and frost up until May 15th.

I like to apply an oil, lime sulfur spray this time of year. This will get rid of many insects and fungi that like to winter over in your roses. Check your garden tools for any repairs, sharpening or replacement they may need. You want to be ready to go when the time comes.

If you have roses you want to move to another location, April and May are the prime times in our area. This gives them plenty of time to develop a new root structure before cold weather in

the fall. I have a bed I have wanted to move for several years and now I am retired I can finally get it done. I will be moving them to a raised bed and away from trees which weren't so big when I planted them there. Being retired is a term I am still trying to get use to. I never knew being retired was such hard work.

Weed control starts now! With the warm days we have had, I see the weeds and spring grasses growing. I prefer the old fashioned organic method - "Grab a hold and pull!" I do not like the chemicals although they do a good job on most weeds and grasses. I have found after spraying with chemical herbicides, my PH would drop and would require an application of lime.

Get out and get at it. Mother Nature will not wait on you.



Time To Get The Rose Program Going

by Meredith Yeago - Consulting Rosarian

Now with the sun getting higher in the sky and with arrival of the robins, rose gardeners are getting eager to get going. It is a good time to check the PH of the soil and perhaps to apply a dormant spray to the roses.

It is a good time to do the spring feeding before getting busy with the spring pruning and such other things as mowing the lawn. Each rosarian appears to have his own feeding mix but a popular one is as follows:

- 3 cups of Mills Magic Ros Mix
- ½ cup garden 10-10-10 fertilizer
- ¼ cup Epsom salts (for magnesium)

Randy Scott had a good idea that produced many winning roses for him. Punch 3 holes about 12 inches duop around the drip line of each plant. Place 1 cup of rose mix in each hole. This procedure places the plant food down where the roots are and where it needs to be.

Resist the urge to start your spring pruning until after you have done your taxes on April 15th. Spring pruning is the plant's signal to break dormancy and start growing. A late freeze can kill the primary growth buds and require most of the summer for the plant to recover. It is better to prune late rather than too early. And depending on the

rainfall, it may be time to start your watering program.

Next year is here now and time to get going!



Growing Roses in Raised Beds

by Charles Shaner - Master Rosarian

I will be giving a Power Point presentation on *Growing Roses in Raised Beds* for the district meeting but I can't include a power point in a newsletter. This is a power point I produced myself. I am an amateur at power points as this is my first.

The soil where I live is as my mother would put it "poor as old Job's turkey". Now, if old Job's turkey was as poor as my soil, that was one sorry bird! I am fighting red clay, shale and lime stone none of which is good for roses. I tried and tried. I dug the hole as I was supposed to - that \$20 hole. Did the feeding and watering, checked the PH and brought it into balance to no avail. My roses just set there. Oh they produced blooms, some good some not so good.

It finally came to light, no matter what I did would be useless unless I got some drainage someway. The answer was raised beds. Clay, shale and limestone just do not let water pass. I helped build the pond on my father's farm. What did we use to build the dam with? - Red Clay! Our red clay east of the Mississippi is different from that on the west. The only thing that will break it up is organics and plenty of them. Mix a little sand with it and you have a brick.

Shale isn't much different. We actually use shale to patch pot holes in the gravel lane coming into the house. What can I say about lime stone. There are ledges of it running all through the area. Solid rock and hard! When I had my well drilled, they hit solid lime stone at 40 feet. The stopped drilling at 310 feet and never got out of it. They did hit 7 gallons of water per minute at that depth - a stream running through the rock.

The answer for me was raised beds. This brought about the job of design, getting materials and good soil. There are many ways to build a raised bed and the major difference is how high you want to make it. If you just want to go a couple of inches, all you need to do us just mound the soil up and plant your roses. I needed to get a little higher than



that. I used 2"x10"x8' pressure treated lumber for the frame. Each coiner and joint has a 4x4 post for strength. I made the beds 40 feet long and used a 2x4

cross brace every 4 feet. It is all held together with 3/8"x 6" lag bolts.

Now that my bed is assembled comes the need for soil. I called a local excavator for a load of sifted top soil. He said the price was the same regardless of the size of the truck so I said send me a load. He pulled in my drive with a tandem construction dump truck load of sifted top soil.



After much shoveling and wheel barrow pushing, I was ready to move my roses. You still need your mulch with raised beds.

I must say I did not lose a single rose to the move. One in particular (*Opening Night*) was doing so bad I was ready to shovel prune. After the move it started to grow and is now a beautiful healthy plant.

There are advantages to raised beds to consider.

1. Drainage - Many soils just do not drain well such as clay. A raised bed solves this problem. If you just dig out the clay and replace it with good soil you still do not have any place for the excess water to go. I once had a man to ask my why his rose were doing good in one end of his bed and not in the other. He had dug out the clay and replaced it with good top soil. His bed was running up and down a hill. The roses at the top of the bed were the ones doing good. I could not convince him he still had a drainage problem at the lower end of the bed.
2. Control PH - When you select the soil for your raised bed you have better control over the PH of the soil. If possible, get a sample

of the soil before you purchase it and test the PH. Nursery soils can be off on the PH as I once ran into. PH meters may be purchased at most garden centers and are very inexpensive. They are not 100% accurate but are good enough for what we are doing.

3. Oh my back! - It seems the older you get the further away the ground gets. Raising the bed up 10 inches makes a big difference in working with your roses.



You still need to mulch your roses and weed control seems to be easier. Raised beds have been the answer for me. It has made the care easier and grows

better roses. Attend the district meeting and learn more about "Growing Roses in Raised Beds" and see the power point.



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