
THORNY BUSH

Newsletter of The Huntington Rose Society; Huntington, WV

Affiliated with the American Rose Society

Volume 25 Issue 6

July/August 2006

Dates to Remember

July 18, 2006 The regular monthly meeting of the Huntington Rose Society will be held on Tuesday, July 18th starting at 7:30 pm at the Central Christian Church, 1202 Fifth Avenue. Diana Fleek will present the program "Drying Roses". Satwant Singh will provide the hospitality.

July 21-23, 2006 ARS All-Miniature Conference & Rose Show will be held in Harrisburg, PA. Contact Glenn Smith at 717-938-9991 or www.yorkcarearosesociety.com for more information.

August 15, 2006 The annual Huntington Rose Society picnic will be held at the home of Bill and Oleta Dolen starting at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, August 15. For more details, see the article inside this newsletter.

September 15-17, 2006 Colonial District Fall Meeting and Rose Show will be held at the Charleston House Holiday Inn in Charleston, WV. Contact Donna Smoot 304-744-8150 for more information.

President's Message

Beverly Delidow

It's been quite a month already hasn't it? Started out hot as a griddle and worked it's way up to sauna. Then the fireworks on the Fourth of July were all delivered by Mother Nature herself, armed with quiverful of lightning bolts and torrential buckets of rain. It will be a couple days before I have to drag out the hoses! Like many, my garden is between cycles, just the stray bud here and

there – except for Carrot Top, which hasn't quit blooming for the last two months. This is my little redhead's year to shine, one of the surprise treasures the rose gardener is blessed with. By the luck of the draw, having few flowers at this time, I am missing the worst of the Japanese beetles this year. Of course, we are helped by the fact that they are not good swimmers and all this rain has surely knocked the stuffing out of them.

When it's not raining cats and dogs, this is a good time of year to move a little slower, bask in a pleasant evening on the porch while the Double Delights and the Honey Perfumes enchant a little breeze with perfect scent. But while you're daydreaming out there, don't forget to fill out those Roses in Review forms. ARS needs your help in rating the roses grown in our area. Also remember that on a couple evenings, you have a date! Our summer meetings – sure to delight the senses as well! On July 18, John and Diana Fleek will present a program on dry-wrapping roses, one of the techniques that help them do so wonderfully in shows and make their wonderful roses last longer. In August, Bill and Oleta Dolen have opened their garden to host our annual picnic. Come and share in the enjoyment of good food, great fellowship and beautiful roses! I will look forward to seeing everyone at these events.

Wishing you cool breezes and sweet scents on these high-summer days.

No Newsletter in August

This note is to remind everyone that there will be no newsletter in August. Information

about the August picnic can be found in this issue.

The Value of Alfalfa

Gary O. Rankin

My first memory of the word "alfalfa" will probably date me, since the first alfalfa that I remember was "Alfalfa" from the "Spanky and Our Gang" comedies. Alfalfa was a tall and lanky youngster with a freckled face and a wisp of hair that stood straight up at the back of his head. He was not too bright and his pants were too short, but his heart was usually in the right place. When we started growing roses in the 1990s, I learned about the other alfalfa - the food for rabbits and roses.

Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) is a member of the pea or legume family and is native to western Asia and eastern Mediterranean regions. The first record of alfalfa was in a book written by the Emperor of China in 2939 BC. The Greeks cultivated alfalfa starting around 500 BC for animal food and for some medicinal applications. Arab tribes named the plant "alfalfa", which means "father of all foods". Now alfalfa is widely grown and provides an important food source for many animals including horses, cows, rabbits and other domestic animals.

Why is alfalfa good for roses? As a fertilizer, alfalfa is 5-1-2, providing a good source of nitrogen, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc, vitamins (A, D, B1, B6, E, K and U) and triacontol, which is a fatty acid growth stimulant. Because of these beneficial components, alfalfa can provide roses many of the substances that they need to grow as well as stimulating growth.

Alfalfa can be used in many ways. Alfalfa meal can be worked into the soil around rose bushes. Normally one cupful per large rose bush and about one-half cup for miniatures is recommended. Alfalfa meal is also contained in many commercial organic products (e.g. Mills Magic Mix) because of its beneficial

components. Alfalfa pellets can be used instead of the meal by again working the pellets into the soil around roses. The pellets will soon break down with watering or by rain to slowly release the trace minerals, triacontol, and other important nutrients. Alfalfa pellets come in many sizes, depending on the animal for which they were intended. Alfalfa pellets for horse feed are much larger than similar pellets for rabbits. I usually buy pelleted rabbit feed that contains alfalfa for this purpose, as well as for making "tea".

Alfalfa "tea" is another good way to provide the nutrients contained in alfalfa to the rose bush. In essence, by making a "tea" you are extracting the nutrients from the alfalfa product (meal or pellet) with water, much as you extract your tea bag to make a cup of Earl Grey or Constant Comment. To make alfalfa tea, put about eight to ten cups of alfalfa meal or pellets into a 30 gallon plastic garbage can, almost fill the can with water, cover and let bake in the sun for three to five days. Stir daily to make sure that the extraction process is well underway and to disperse any organic matter that has risen to the top of the water.

Eventually, the water extract will take on an orange color and the fibrous organic material will settle on the bottom of the garbage can. Now you are almost ready to give the roses a drink of your "tea". Since I usually make alfalfa tea in the early and late summer, the water often gets very hot in the covered garbage can. For that reason, I try to put out the tea early in the morning. But if I have to put out the tea after work, then filling the garbage can to the near the top with the cool water from the hydrant helps cool down the tea and prevents damaging tender roots. I learned this lesson the hard way, by filling the garbage can up all the way at the beginning and burning some roots on my bushes when I applied the tea in the late afternoon without adding cooler water first. Now, I always leave room to add 5 or more gallons of fresh water

to fill the can and cool the contents before applying morning or afternoon.

You can also fortify your alfalfa tea by adding additional ingredients before serving your tea. Water-soluble fertilizers, fish emulsion, and/or Epsom salts can be mixed with you tea to fortify the brew. Simply use the normal amount you would use in a regular fertilizer concoction or a little less to create the drink of champion roses! As with a regular fertilization program, give a gallon of the tea to large roses and about one-half gallon to miniature and miniflora roses. Be careful not to stir up the organic material on the bottom as you dip out the tea.

After you have served the tea to your roses, the garbage cans should still have most of the fibrous material and a few gallons of liquid left in the bottom of the can. You can refill the garbage can with water and get a second extraction a few days later. After applying the second extract to your roses, you will need to dispose of the fibrous material. Some rosarians work the fibrous material into the soil of the rose garden as a soil amendment. However, you can also apply the alfalfa tea or the fibrous remains to other flowers. Our perennials especially like the leftovers, so we use all of the material, extract and solids.

So, if you see me carrying bags of rabbit food out to my car, rest assured that I haven't gotten an Easter bunny. I'm headed home to make tea!

Howard Walters' Thought for the Month: "The trouble with good advice is that it usually interferes with our plans." From the February, 2002 *American Rose* magazine.

Gemini

Gaird Hamilton

Here on the North Coast of California up in Redwood Country, we had record rainfall in

December 2002 (40 inches unofficially in our yard), and I was to pick out the Rose of the Month for our newsletter. I thought that it might be hard to decide because there are so many from which to choose. As I walked out front in a light drizzle though, my choice was made for me when I saw some nice blooms on 'Gemini.' We have four bushes of 'Gemini,' and there is not one leaf with black spot after not being sprayed since September. They are in different parts of the garden also. When you add deep green glossy large foliage all year long, to a rose which has exhibition form and can win a top trophy for you, it is a hard combination to beat.

For those of you who like an official description, from Modern Roses XI, ('Anne Morrow Lindbergh' x 'New Year'), bud pointed, ovoid; flowers cream, blushing coral pink, dbl., 25-30 petals, 4.5-5 in., exhibition form, usually borne singly, moderate, sweet fragrance; prickles moderate; foliage large, deep green, glossy; long stems; upright, spreading, tall (5.5 ft) growth; AARS 2000.

This is definitely one time when the AARS winner turns out to be a show winner too. In spite of the fact that it has only been out since 2000, it is ranked 23rd in exhibition rankings for the 5 years from 1997-2001 even though during the first part of those five years it was not available. It will probably be in the top 10 by next year.

While a lot of you probably do not plan to exhibit your roses in a rose show, these roses look great and last a long time in a bouquet, or on the bush. Because of not having too many petals, and because the petals have good substance, Gemini manages to have nice looking roses even during those damp coastal weather times. It also has a quick repeat time between flushes. If you have a spot in your yard which is crying out for a rose, give it a try, you'll like it.

After writing this article, we went to our local nursery which carries a good supply of roses

and tried to get Gemini. They said that they had not received it from the growers. A check of our other nurseries showed the same short supply. I know that it is available by mail order, so if you can't find it locally, don't give up. Request it. That is the way to keep a great rose in good production.

Editor's Note: This article was published as the April 2003 Rose of the Month on the American Rose Society website (www.ars.org).

Annual Huntington Rose Society Picnic

The annual potluck picnic for the Huntington Rose Society will be held at the home of Bill and Oleta Dolen, 217 Township Road 339, Proctorville, Ohio on **Tuesday, August 15th starting at 6:30 PM.** Directions to the Dolen's home are given at the end of this article. The Society will provide meat, pop, plates, napkins and eating utensils. Everyone is asked to bring a covered dish (vegetable, salad or dessert) to add to the meal.

Everyone in the Society is invited to attend the picnic and to bring guests. We would especially like to encourage our new members to come and enjoy a relaxing evening among other rose enthusiasts and share the beauty of the Dolen's home and rose garden. The Dolen's moved to their home in Ohio and transferred their rose garden just a few years ago. This picnic is an especially great way for new members to interact with other members of the Society and to see someone else's garden. The picnic is always an enjoyable evening filled with good food, lots of friendly folks and a little conversation about roses. So please come out and enjoy the evening.

Directions to August Picnic -

From Huntington, take the 31st Street Bridge (the suspension bridge) into Ohio. Go through the first traffic light and turn right at

the fork in the road. Proceed to the stoplight and turn left onto Rt. 775. Go ~4 miles and you will see a two-story building with a large blue strip around it on your left and a small green sign on you right that says "Union T 339". Turn right at the sign. The Dolen's home is the first house on the left.

ROSES IN REVIEW

Monica Valentovic

It is time again for Roses in Review (RIR), the American Rose Society program where the rosarians who grow the new roses, get to rate the new roses. This year marks the 81st time that RIR has been conducted. Once again the ARS is asking that "garden" rosarians as well as exhibitors rate the roses listed for review this year. You need not be a member of the ARS to participate in RIR, as there is an effort being made this year to get as much input on the new roses as possible. The complete results of the survey will be included in the January 2007 issue of *American Rose* magazine and will help determine the ratings for the next issue of the *ARS Handbook for Selecting Roses*. While participating in RIR is a voluntary activity for many rosarians, **Consulting Rosarians should remember that you are required to participate in RIR as one of your CR activities.**

There are two ways to complete the rating process. One way is to fill out rating forms on each cultivar from this year's list that you grow. If you are a member of the ARS, then you can use the forms provided in the June, 2006 issue of the *American Rose* magazine. The list of roses to be rated is also listed in this issue. If you currently are growing or previously have grown a listed cultivar, then you can and should rate it. You will be asked to indicate the name of the cultivar (e.g. Chattooga) and class (miniature), assign a garden and exhibitor rating (0 - 10), and comment (check one answer) on winter hardiness, height, disease susceptibility, and

fragrance. You also have the opportunity to write a short statement about what you particularly like or dislike about each rose. It usually takes about one to two minutes to rate each rose. Each page of rating forms allows you to rate four to five roses. You can make photocopies of the rating forms if you need more forms than provided in the magazine. Once the forms are complete, they should be mailed to the Colonial District RIR Coordinators, **David and Terry Cottrell, 5116 Mill Race Circle, Richmond, VA 23234-3835**. We will bring copies of the RIR forms to the next meeting. So, if you are not a member of the ARS and would like to participate, you can use this material.

The second way that you can complete the RIR process is on-line. The ARS web site (www.ars.org) will have a link for Roses in Review on the home page that will direct you to electronic forms and other information that you can use to complete the rating process. Once you submit your ratings to the ARS, they will automatically be forwarded to the District RIR Coordinators. Again this year, prizes being awarded to participants from the winning Districts.

So, let's help the Colonial District be a winner by everyone participating in the Roses in Review program.

**"Earth Kind" Roses are Low
Maintenance
Monica Valentovic**

Earth Kind roses are the product of a 4-year study at **Texas A&M University** to evaluate low maintenance roses. Over 117 varieties of roses were evaluated during the 4 year period. These roses were planted in soil that contained more clay than the average garden soil contains. These roses were mulched, watered by a drip irrigation system and that was it. These roses were not sprayed with any pesticides and they were not fertilized. It is apparent from these conditions that these

roses received less attention than the average home gardener gives his or her roses.

The end result of these studies was that several roses managed to survive these conditions and displayed good tolerance to fungal diseases and insects. The roses that were selected as being tolerant of these conditions were given the title of **Earth Kind** Roses. It is interesting to note that these roses were from all types of roses from climbers to polyanthas.

So if you are looking for some disease tolerant, low maintenance roses, then try some of these varieties out in your garden. You can get many of these varieties locally, so it will not be difficulty to try them out this year.

China rose (probably will not survive our winter) Mutabalis

Climber Climbing Pinkie

Floribunda Else Poulsen, med pink

Polyanthas

Caldwell Pink (Pink Pet)

Marie Daly, med pink

Perle D'Or, yellow blend, double

The Fairy

Shrubs

Belinda's Dream, med pink

Carefree Beauty

Katy Road Pink

Knock Out

Sea Foam white double, excellent for

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The Thorny Bush

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