



American Goldfinch

Rose Ramblings

<http://spokanerosesociety.com>

Newsletter of Spokane Rose Society

Affiliated with the American Rose Society

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2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NO MARCH MEETING – STAY HOME, STAY SAFE!

~~**March 25** – Michele (Opca) LaBelle will give a program on organic soil conditioning and fertilizers~~

April 22 – Kevin Brownlee will give us his program on hybridizing. He presented this at the Heritage Rose group where he received rave reviews

May 9 is Garden Expo where we will have a booth and mini roses for sale. Volunteers are needed.

June 24 – because of our sabbatical from our annual rose show, this year Lynn Schafer will give a talk on miniature roses

July 22 will bring Anne Franks showing flower arrangements and how you can make these yourself.

August 26 - a rose lecture at Carol Newcomb's nursery with wine and dessert

September 23 – wine making...with roses

October 28 – will be our annual meeting and informal rose show

November closes out the year with a potluck

THIS MONTH

When will this end? No one can give us a good answer. In the meantime, it is not a good idea to congregate and share things, PARTICULARLY the COVID-19 virus. That being said, we have cancelled this month's meeting and may have to do the same next month.

In the meantime, I was outside yesterday planting a Cosmic Crisp apple tree. That done, I looked at my raspberry "jungle" and thought, "Hmm. The weather is nice, and I could just get in there and clean out a few..." Well, an hour or two later I had made a good start. Why would I tell you this? Because I start with the raspberries, then the shrub roses, then the minis and finally the modern large roses – hybrid teas, grandifloras, floribundas and climbers.

I am seeing lots of buds starting to grow on the roses, so they are looking good and ready to begin the new growing season. While we are dealing with this day by day, Carol Newcomb still plans to have her pruning seminars on April 11 and 18 unless the Governor shuts all businesses down. Stay tuned! As far as your roses are concerned, we will have pruning tips in this newsletter.

This year, as you know, Andrew Smith is doing Northland Rosarium Mail Order roses, and Rosarium Garden Center is Carol's nursery where plants are available for pickup there. She will be opening that business again on April 8 hopefully. This is always my destination place. If you want roses shipped to you, visit www.northlandrosarium.com. I'm looking forward to seeing how this new venture will work out.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Anne Franks



A Note From Anne...

In my first message to you as President, I talked about “it’s about time”. Little did I know that **time** would bring about the current changes that surround us in our state, the nation, and even the world. But we are all faced with a serious virus that demands our attention and certain life style changes for a while. Meetings have been cancelled, schools are closed, people are distancing themselves from others, and on and on, all to *hopefully* stay well and safe. So, **we follow rules and CDC guidelines!**

However, on the positive, brighter side, it is now *officially Spring*. And few things feel more like Spring than flowers, roses especially. After months of a cold, unproductive landscape, little specks of color begin to appear, reminding us that beauty is not far from reach. Little green shoots are coming out on all of my roses and that truly is a thing of beauty to me.

In the same way, like the buds that will burst from our roses, we can look through the lens of nature’s camera and know that the challenge that we are facing now with the Covid-19 virus is just like winter. We will come through it together and enjoy the beauty of our lives and our flowers/roses again, hopefully, real soon.

Stay safe and be well.



Rose Logic

Lynn Schafer
Master Rosarian

Well...this is the illogical side of me. The logical side would have been at Palouse Country Assisted Living each evening to serve beverages to the residents and interact with them. But because of this horrid virus going around, I am no longer able to do this and have to settle with waiting until “this too shall pass.”

In the meantime, it doesn’t stop us from gardening, does it? And I still walk my dog each morning out here in the sunshine and fresh air. Not a lot of people out at that time of day, anyway, and being rural, NO ONE is out! ☺ As I mentioned on the first page of this newsletter, my raspberries are in the process of getting a “haircut.” I always wait until spring to do that, other than cutting them back to keep them from lying down on the job. This is my way of getting all those muscles working again, including the ones handling the pruners.

My daughter-in-law has fallen in love with David Austin roses, and she has a good number of them either in her back yard or to be shipped this spring. We were looking at her roses, and she was wondering if she should be pruning. My advice: Wait until the new growth begins to see what you want to keep and what needs to be removed. Sometimes if we get too speedy with cutting out things, the other canes may not be as viable as we wished. You can’t put the cut canes back on, believe me! So the old axiom about pruning *before* new growth begins is not a valid reason to prune early...and prune twice after freezing occurs. As I have said before, if pruning causes the rose cane to “bleed,” we shouldn’t cut roses for rose shows or for our own use, as that would cause the same thing.

Shrub roses, unlike once-blooming old garden roses, can be pruned at any time. You may see a lot more new growth in your gardens in protected areas than mine where they are out in the open. So far, in looking over my roses, they all seem to have come through the winter like troopers, in spite of that shock we had recently with temperatures in the teens. Believe me, when I looked at the chill factor of 3.4 degrees, I told my dog he would have to do that day on his own. But you would never know it from looking at the plants. The crocuses are blooming, the daffodils and tulips are ready to pop, and before long the forsythia bushes will be bright yellow. That is a good key as to when to begin your pruning...or the dandelions in your neighbor’s yard! Using an oldie but goodie example, you see three pruning cuts here. The one on the right is correct. The one on the left is too high, the one in the middle cuts through the cane where the nutrients will be supplied to the bud. You want to have the cut about a quarter inch above the bud, cutting at an angle if you can, but the bud doesn’t know if it is a 45-degree or not. That is just a “suggestion,” the idea being that it allows water to drop off so the cane won’t rot. Has



that been proven? I doubt it, but it gives purpose to your pruning. Don't worry about it; just know pruning is to get rid of unwanted stuff and leave the good things.

If you can find a healthy bud growing toward the outside of the bush, it is good to use that, rather than one growing toward the inside which will make the center less open to the air and create a potential site for powdery mildew. During the summer that is going to happen naturally, but let's start out right. This year I don't believe you will have to prune very low, as my plants seem ready to begin well up on the canes, however, I haven't cut into any of them yet, so I can't tell what the center looks like. This is a good example of good cane/bad cane. The one on the right is definitely not going to survive and will die back below that example. So you need to cut lower on the cane until you find what looks more like the one on the left, white or light green. This is one of those years where you probably won't have to look too far to find that nice healthy wood.



Someone asked me, "How do you prune a rose bush?" Well, first it depends on what kind of rose it is. Old garden roses that bloom only once a year should not be pruned until **after** they bloom. Otherwise, you cut off all the blooms for that season. Remontant or repeat blooming roses should be pruned in the spring. Shrubs like rugosas can be shaped at that time and cut back to fit the space any other time of the growing season. Cut out the dead wood or spindly growth you don't want. Shape the bush to the desired height, and that's all you need to do, as rugosas do **not** like chemical sprays and are very healthy in themselves, thank you kindly! Regular shrubs or the modern David Austin shrubs are basically shaped, cleaned out, and molded as you see fit.

Miniature roses grow in many different shapes and sizes. 'Whimsy' is a large, vigorous bush, but others grow more like hybrid teas, so after you have grown a rose for a season, you know its 'personality' and can prune to that. I have heard of people taking hedge trimmers and just hacking everything off to the desired height, but that seems a bit harsh to me. I like to do each rose individually. 'Lynn' is another vigorous grower, and of course I have to take care of her!! And then there is 'Popcorn.' I never know just how seriously I need to prune that, as it is just a bundle of leaves and stems, gives me absolutely no grief throughout the summer, and blooms its little head off. As I say, learn their personality and you will know how to prune them in the future.

Floribundas need to be allowed to do their thing, which is bloom more heavily than hybrid teas, often in clusters, so leave more canes and branches on the canes than you would hybrid teas, pruning just to shape the plant. I love my floribundas for their constant bloom cycles. My yard is set up to showcase the roses, and you can't do that if you don't keep them deadheaded, fertilized and watered properly. But floribundas provide more constant bloom to give color to the beds.

Hybrid tea and grandiflora roses are pruned to clean wood as shown above and I allow about 5 canes. Our climate is not like the west side or even the south where they can limit them to 3 canes, so I allow these babies to have more canes which means more leaves to feed the rose bush through the growing season, making it less likely that they will expire in the cold of winter.

Climbers are just trimmed back to good wood and let do their thing. 'Fourth of July' was not said to be a hardy rose, but I have had it for a number of years on a north-facing bed, and it has done very well for me. I love the color of that rose. 'Gertrude Jekyll' is classed as a David Austin shrub rose, but it grows like a climber or rambler with long canes, so I grow it that way. I have one planted at our church, and last summer the kids doing the vacation Bible school who also do projects while here cut poor Gertrude back like a hybrid tea, losing all those beautiful blooms that would have happened had it been left to do its thing. But the wonder of it all is this didn't kill the plant, didn't hurt it at all, just left it with many fewer blooms. As I have told so many people, pruning won't kill the rose unless you cut below the bud graft or dig it out. And it's kind of like raising your children. Each one has a personality, and you need to learn what that personality is and prune to it.

If you have questions about pruning, hopefully there will be two Saturday pruning demonstrations at Carol's Garden Center and you can ask them there. If you don't feel safe going out in public, there is always email – lynnschafer@gmail.com, and I am very happy to answer any questions you may have. I may have (probably have) missed some important thing you needed to know, and I will help with that.

After you prune, if you use chemicals, it is a good idea to apply a fungicide to prevent the beginning of blackspot, which will hang around the rest of the year, sometimes spreading to other nearby roses. Powdery mildew (thankfully we don't have the deadly downy mildew) can be cured with a good fungicide, but blackspot is not so kind. Better to get ahead of it before it gets started. Then when the soil is at least 40 degrees you can apply a chemical fertilizer if that is your choice. Organic fertilizers can be applied year round, as they need to break down into a chemical before they can be used. I personally use about a third of a cup sprinkled around the big roses, scratched in and watered in, watering first if the soil is dry and then watering after. That will get the chemical down into the soil where it can be absorbed without burning the roots. Clean up the beds and then wait for those beautiful roses to appear.

EARTHWORMS BY NANETTE LONDEREE, MASTER ROSARIAN, MARIN ROSE SOCIETY

(From the Criterion the District bulletin of the NCNH, Jolene Adams, editor)

"I doubt that there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world" said Charles Darwin of the earthworm. More descriptive perhaps, Aristotle called worms the "guts of the earth." In either case, it is apparent that these little critters below our feet have been recognized for their valuable contribution for centuries. If you see lots of earthworms in your garden soil, be thankful and congratulations! It's a sign of healthy soil, one of the key elements in growing good roses, or any other plant.

Some interesting facts about earthworms:



- They are animals, classified as annelids
- They are the dominant animal life in the soil (they can number several million to an acre in good soil and bring 20 tons of soil to the surface each year)
- They occur in most temperate soils and many tropical soils • There are 3 families, more than 700 genera, and more than 7,000 species of earthworms
- They range from an inch to two yards in length and are found seasonally at all depths in the soil
- They are nocturnal • Direct exposure to sunlight can be fatal to them in less than three minutes
- They breathe through their skin • They have a brain and are sensitive to taste, touch, light and vibration
- They are mostly muscles and nerves – muscles run the length of the body as well as circling the body
- The first one-third of the body contains the vital organs; the remaining two-thirds contain the intestines
- They are hermaphrodites, meaning that they exhibit both male and female characteristics
- Offspring can live for 10–12 years, provided they aren't found by a hungry bird, a gardener's spade or pesticides in the soil
- They can eat their weight in decaying plant matter each day

For most gardeners, earthworms are a common sight, and one to be encouraged. What do earthworms really do? Lots of good things to the soil including:

Mix and aggregate the soil – As they consume organic matter and mineral particles, earthworms excrete wastes in the form of casts, a type of soil aggregate. The burrowing action of the worms moves soil particles closer together near burrow walls, and the mucus secreted by the worms as they burrow can also help bind the soil particles together. By mixing the soil, they help achieve the proper air, water, and solids ratio for maximum plant growth.

Stimulate microbial activity – Although earthworms derive their nutrition from microorganisms, many more microorganisms are present in their feces, or casts, than in the organic matter that they consume. As organic matter passes through their intestines, it is fragmented and inoculated with microorganisms. Free-living nitrogen fixing bacteria (good for plants) are more numerous around the sides of earthworm burrows.

Increase infiltration – The worms maze of tunnels increases the soils ability to absorb water. Some species make permanent burrows deep into the soil. These burrows can persist long after the occupant has died and can be a major conduit for soil drainage, particularly under heavy rainfall. At the same time, the burrows minimize surface water erosion. The horizontal burrowing of other species in the top several inches of soil increases overall porosity and drainage.

Improve water-holding capacity – By fragmenting organic matter and increasing soil porosity and aggregation, earthworms can significantly increase the water-holding capacity of soils.

Provide channels for root quality – The channels made by deep burrowing earthworms are lined with readily available nutrients and make it easier for roots to penetrate deep into the soil.

Bury/shred residues – Plant and crop residue are gradually buried by cast material deposited on the surface and as earthworms pull surface residue into their burrows.

Neutralize soil pH – Analysis of earthworm castings, or earthworm manure, shows that the soil that comes out of the back end of an earthworm is closer to a neutral pH (7) than what goes in the front end, regardless of whether the existing soil is above or below pH (7). This is achieved by the action of the worms calciferous gland and the buffering action of carbonic acid. Soil which has passed through the gut of an earthworm shows much more available phosphorus and potassium than the same soil which has not passed through the worm.

Reduce harmful nematode populations – As yet, the exact reasons are unclear, but soil with earthworms invariably has less harmful parasitic nematodes than soil without earthworms.

Improve overall soil quality – The activity of the earthworm gut is like a miniature composting tube that mixes, conditions and inoculates plant residues. The earthworm removes plant litter from the soil surface, turning it into free manure. It has been demonstrated that earthworm castings contain about five times the nitrate, seven times the available phosphorous, three times the exchangeable magnesium, eleven times the potassium and 1.5 times the calcium as regular soil. Research has also shown that microbial activity in worm castings is 10 to 20 times higher than in the soil and organic matter that the worm ingests.

There are two major types of earthworms, the deep burrowers and the shallow dwellers. The deep burrowers (“night crawlers”) build large, vertical, permanent burrows that may extend 5 to 6 feet deep or more. They pull plant residues down into the mouth of their burrow, where the residues soften and can be eaten at a later time. The shallow dwelling worms (known as red worms, gray worms, fish worms, and many other names) are comprised of many species that live primarily in the top 12 inches of soil. The adults are usually 3 to 5 inches long and they do not build permanent burrows. They randomly burrow throughout the topsoil, ingesting residues and mineral soil as they go. Night crawlers tend to be more active in spring and fall, but they may not go into a complete resting state in summer or winter since they can retreat to the bottom of their burrows during extremes of heat or cold. New worms will generally only emerge when soil moisture and temperature conditions are suitable.

Earthworms thrive best on organic debris that contain a high percentage of nitrogen. This is encouraged through the addition of organic soil amendments and mulch. Water is also a major necessity of earthworms because they contain about 80% water by weight and lose about 15% per day. If moisture is not available, they will dig deep into the soil to find it. Simply adding earthworms to poor soil won't do much good. However, if you add organic material to your soil, chances are the worms will come. So, it is pretty easy, just add organics when planting or mulching and keep things watered – and the worms will come.

Earthworms are truly the gardener's best friend. And one last added benefit ... they provide free fishing bait!



Transplanting Roses By Kevin Glaes

(from the March 2020 edition of The Philadelphia Rose Society newsletter, Bill Kozemchak, Editor)

Early Spring is a good to transplant roses. For best results, it should be done as early in the year as possible before the roses break dormancy. The weather determines when you can do it. Naturally, the soil must be workable, which means thawed in out part of the world, but not too wet. Soggy soil will compact too much when you firm in the rose in the new hole. March is generally the time when I can do this. If I must, I will transplant roses later in the spring, even in July and August, but the best results come from planting in March. Pick a day when it will be cloudy and mild, not hot and sunny. Best chance for this is early in the morning. The steps seem obvious, but executing them in order gives you the greatest chance for success.

First, dig the new hole for the rose. I don't have problems with rocks and shale, so I always dig my holes 18" deep and 18" wide. Prepare the soil in the new hole to your satisfaction. Mound the prepared soil out around the edges of the hole so you have the hole open and ready for the new bush. Always prepare about 1/3 more soil than you think you need (I tend to underestimate). You will be hilling extra soil up the canes when finished to protect the canes.

Dig out the bush. Work the shovel around the bush out at the drip line, loosening the soil as you go around the bush, pushing the shovel blade deeper as you go. Once you have made a complete circle around the bush start around again, working the blade deeper until the tip is down 16-18". When you are at least half way round, you can begin gently using the shovel as a lever, trying to lift the bush a bit and see how much “give” there is. If the bush appears to be lifting easily with no roots holding it fast in the ground, you can attempt to lift the bush out by hand. Dig deeper in a circle around the bush until gives easily all around. Try to keep as much soil on the root ball as possible. Next, with either your hands or with the shovel, lift the entire bush out of the ground. Careful! This can mean a very heavy mass. I get on my knees and lift the bush out and into a wheelbarrow to move it to the new hole. If the mass is too heavy, cut some canes back and loosen off some of the soil until it is manageable. You can cut some canes back before you start digging if you realize that the bush is too big “as is” for you to move.

At the new hole, gently place the bush in the hole and check the level. It should be at the same, soil level it was in the old hole. If not, remove or add soil as necessary. Push soil into the hole until it is about half covered and firm the soil with your hands, making sure to fill in any air pockets you can see. Push in more soil until the soil level is correct and firm with your hands again. Build a bit of a berm around the edges of hole to hold water.

Now, water, water, water! I slowly fill the hole with water until I have around an inch of water standing in the hole. This is about 10-15 gallons. I wait about 2 hours and fill the hole again until water is standing. If I have done this early in the morning, I will come back in the late afternoon and fill the hole again. Mound the extra soil up the canes about 12 inches to protect them. Fill the hole with water again the next morning and evening. (Yes, use lots of water!) I then wait two days and water again and then back off to my normal schedule of watering every 4 days if we get no rain.

I don't use transplant booster or any soil amendments at planting time, but that is just my preference. Use what has proven effective for you in the past when planting roses.

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MEMBERSHIP in Spokane Rose Society is open to anyone. We meet on the **fourth Wednesday** of each month, February through November, 6:00 p.m. at **the meeting room by the conservatory at Manito Park** in Spokane, Washington, (unless otherwise noted) with a special program each month and refreshments following hosted by members. Guests are always welcome. Our rose library has rose-related books and videos you can check out. Workshops may be held at pre-announced times throughout the year on meeting nights.

DUES are as follows: If you receive the newsletter by Email it is \$10 a year. For those wishing to receive the newsletter by postal service it is \$15 per year. Mail your check, made payable to SPOKANE ROSE SOCIETY to Lynn Schafer, 42108 S. Bourne Rd., Latah, WA 99018-9508. THIS NEWSLETTER, one of the benefits of membership, is published 10 times a year, to coincide with our monthly meetings.

If you wish to join the American Rose Society, you can test first with a trial four-month membership for \$10, which gives you four issues of *Roses and You*, two issues of American Rose magazine, discounts at merchant partners, and free or reduced garden admissions if you travel a lot. This is an \$86 value for \$10.

Spokane Rose Society

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