ay to Grow in Orinda Rose Care Tips and Tricks – Getting the Most from Your Roses



Steve & Cathy Lambert

ast February, we wrote our first in a series of articles about roses. That article focused primarily on the different classifications of roses and how to choose the right rose for your Orinda garden. This article will provide you with some rose-care tips and tricks for getting the most from your roses

We have planted all sorts of rose gardens for Orinda homeowners, from the very formal to a mixed perennial border with roses to just a few accent roses scattered throughout a yard. No matter the extent of your rose garden you should demand and expect the most from your roses. We believe a well-cared-for rose bush should provide you with arms-full of blooms as early and late in the year as the weather will allow. We have developed a diligent care and feeding schedule, and a few shortcuts, to achieve optimum bloom for your roses. Even the most novice gardeners should be able to follow these guidelines and achieve great results.

Choosing and Planting Your Roses

The most common way to purchase roses used to be in bare-root form. These are unpotted roses with the roots packed in a bag full of saw dust. Lately, these are becoming harder to find. More nurseries are potting their roses as soon as they arrive from the grower. If you prefer to buy your roses in bare-root form you can still do so at stores like Orchard Supply Hardware and Home Depot. You can also purchase bareroot roses through mail order catalogs or online through companies like Jackson & Perkins or Carlton Roses.

Whether you purchase your roses potted or bare-root always look for roses rated #1 Grade to get the best results. Choose roses with three to four thick stems. The stem thickness you want is comparable to that of a toddler-sized crayon.

Dig a hole about 16 to 18 inches wide, depending on the size of your root ball, and about 16 inches deep. Next, mix your soil amendment with some of the native soil that you just removed from the hole at a 50/50 ratio. We used to prepare our own special planting amendment for roses. Now you can purchase excellent quality, commercially prepared rose planting mixes at high-end nurseries like McDonnell's Nursery in Orinda or Orchard Nursery in Lafayette. Refill your hole about 1/3 of the way to the top with your 50/50 blend.

Before placing your rose in the hole, gently spread out the root ball shaking off some of the dirt with your fingers. You want to place your rose so that the bud union (the first branching-out of the stems above the root ball) is three inches above the dirt. Keep in mind that your soil mixture will compact a little after planting.

Mulching Your Roses

The most common reason that people use mulch is to help control weed growth. Mulching has many other benefits. It conserves water and provides valuable organic nutrients to the roots as water travels through the mulch. Mulching shades the soil from the sun and protects small feeder roots growing at or near the surface. Mulching also makes it easier to add granular fertilizers without disturbing the soil and roots.

We use and recommend my own mulch blend. This blend includes alfalfa (which adds alcohol tricontanol to the soil, providing shine to your rose leaves and helping new buds to break), chicken manure with a nitrogen rate of 1.5 percent, scoria (dust and small particles of red lava rock) which add valuable rock phosphates to the soil as it breaks down. Then top this mixture with a black fir bark. This mulch blend can be placed as high as four inches above the soil, but should not cover the bud union (graft). You can also purchase a storebought rose amendment to use as your mulch, because it contains many of the same ingredients listed above.

Watering Your Roses

Although many rose experts recommend a drip system for watering your roses, we find that most roses don't respond well to drip irrigation. The main reason experts recommend drip versus overhead watering is because many of the diseases that could attack your roses prefer wet leaves. Our solution to this watering contradiction is to use low-angled spray heads and set your timer to water in the early morning. This watering practice provides an even source of water to the root zone while bringing with it fertilizers and organic nutrients. Watering early in the morning will also allow plenty of time for the leaves to dry.

Pruning Your Roses More than any other landscape plant, roses require proper pruning. Whole

chapters in rose care guides have been dedicated to proper rose pruning. What follows are the key rules to remember when pruning your roses.

In our climate, dormant rose pruning should be done between Super Bowl Sunday and Valentine's Day. Remember don't give your sweetheart a valentine until you've pruned your roses. Begin by removing all the unhealthy "dead" wood and then all the twiggy growth. Unless the bush has very few healthy canes, we recommend removing all growth with a diameter of less than a pencil's thickness. Also, remove all inward-facing buds. Next, remove the oldest cane at the bud union. This should encourage the shrub to produce several new canes. Examine the bush and choose four to seven strong, healthy canes and prune these by at least half of their length. Don't worry if you have fewer than four strong canes. Prune however many you have using this advice and your rose will re-grow many more strong canes.

We prune all our roses down to 12 to 18 inches in height. This harsh treatment is rewarded with armfuls of beautiful full blossoms upon the next bloom. Many hybrids demand this type of harsh pruning. These vigorous roses include: Brandy, Double Delight, Rio Samba, Peace, Ingrid Bergman, French Perfume, and others. Other roses, with less pruning, will be a good landscape-show rose as well. Lastly,

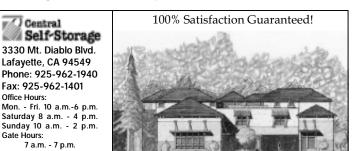
always cut 1/4 inch above an outward facing bud union (preferably after a second five-leaflet set) and cut at an angle not exceeding 45 degrees. Make sure the leaflet you cut above is outward facing, as this is where the new bud will form. Always remember the "pencil thickness" rule to avoid having a new rose stem form where its base is not strong enough to support it.

Fertilizing Your Roses

Let us begin with a general introduction on fertilizers and NPK. N (the first letter) stands for nitrogen, which is the most important growth stimulant. Nitrogen also helps in forming the chlorophyll and nutrient uptake. P (the second letter) stands for phosphorus, which stimulates root and flower formation. Phosphorus also aids Final and the second se development of stems and leaves, while also increasing the plant's resistance to disease

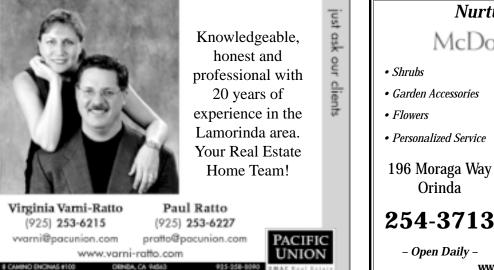
We ordinarily begin feeding our roses the first week in March. Fortunately, for those of us living in the East Bay, that's when the winter weather is usually behind us. You may find it helpful to make the following notations in your 2007 calendar.

March: During the first week of March, get your rose plants off to a quick start by [SEE GROW page 22]





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meet monthly to train leaders in listening and facilitating skills. Speakers from different organizations are invited for their training, so they also get an in-depth look and understanding into relevant discussion topics.

"Sister to Sister has taught me so much regarding how to interact with people and about pressing social issues, explains Christina Choi, Miramonte senior, Adds Marisa Weiss, a Las Lomas junior,

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"Through our training I have learned so much, be it facts and statistics on drugs and alcohol or how to take initiative and be a leader.

"To help girls grow into confident, successful women is a great common goal for all of us," explains Choi.

What I want to emphasize is that we work hard to make this day a really fun and meaningful day for all girls, not just the outgoing ones, or just the shy ones says Mary Yeh, a Miramonte High School senior. "We try to convey this message through our ice cream socials held before the summit at each individual middle school. This is not a program designed for the misfits or the so-called 'losers,' as the girls who are facilitators can attest to. They are all very accomplished, fun, and friendly girls."

If the girls do not feel like sharing in small discussion groups they may write ideas down on the walls, and by the end of the day, the slates are peppered with messages. It helps to know that other girls out there see the world and the growing-up years in similar ways.

This year's theme is "Road Trip" with decorations, games, and activities that will revolve around it. "Starting last year, the girls on the gift committee decided that we will stray away from bag fillers and give girls meaningful gifts," explains Burgess. 'They designed a CD with fun music filled with positive messages for girls, and this year, they have designed a bumper sticker that can be used on a car, a school agenda, or a notebook."

The special T-shirts girls wear throughout the day bring uniformity to all participants, short or tall, skinny or not. Shwartz said the group is grateful for the continuing support of Orinda Village Realty, which is again underwriting the cost of T-shirts, and said that it keeps the costs down so that the event is open for \$20 per participant.

"The culmination of all our efforts is such an amazing production for all parties involved and incredibly fun as we engage all people through discussion, dance. activities, speakers, performances, and delicious foods," says Choi. "The end of the summit's day is both an exhilaration and a relief at completing another year of Sister to Sister and a sad event as we realize that it is the end of community building amongst the high school facilitators - until the next year's planning begins."

For more information about the event go to www.aauwoml.org/Sistertosister.html.

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using one cup of high-nitrogen fertilizer such as an ammonium sulfate 21-0-0 blend or any good lawn fertilizer. Sprinkle the fertilizer in a circle under the plant's natural drip lines (beneath the outermost stems). In the third week of March, apply 3/4 cup of Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate) in the same manner as above. Epsom salt can be purchased at your local drug store for a few dollars less than most nurseries charge. Magnesium sulfate has important trace nutrients and enzymes that translate to vibrant red leaf growth and an increase in new canes

April: During the first week of April, apply commercial rose food (i.e. Ortho, 49er, or Best) with systemic disease and insecticide action. Use package guidelines for amounts. Apply again during the third week of April, this time following the feeding with a 3/4 cup Epsom salts application.

May: Apply multipurpose food 16-16-16 to roses during the month of May. Your roses are feeding heavily at this time and need a balanced diet. In the third week, apply 1/2 cup Epsom salts

June: Repeat the May feeding schedule in June.

July: Again, feed roses with rose food and systemic nutrients during the first week of July. If the roses are not in heavy bloom by the end of the month, you may add a liquid organic fertilizer both through the roots by adding it to a watering can, and by foliar ingestion by spraying it on your plant. August: Repeat May feeding schedule

again in August. September: In September, you want

roses to start concentrating on blooms and not foliage. This is accomplished by feeding your rose bushes with a granular 0-10-10 fertilizer.

October: Repeat September feeding schedule in the third week of October. Do not add fertilizer to roses after Halloween. You don't want to encourage tender new growth now just before the weather turns cold. The soil around properly cared for roses will have plenty of nutrients left to bring out those last few blooms.

Steve and Cathy Lambert are doing some research for an upcoming article to try and locate the oldest palm trees in Orinda. If you have an old palm tree in your yard or if you know of one, email gardenlights@comcast.net or call 254-4797.

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on to acting and doing TV commercials and has written a book about it, available on Amazon.com.

Architect of Miramonte, James Fessenden, 87, strolled over from Orinda Senior Village to talk about the school his firm built.

The pastor of Orinda Community Church, Frank Baldwin, provided the Fellowship Hall for the party and a life-sized camel to mark the spot. The dromedary has a history of its own. In the '60s, the paper mache figures were being hauled away to the dump when Ken Barnes, associate pastor at the Orinda church, and asked that the Kaiser truck walked by head for Orinda instead. Unfortunately, he forgot to mention his find to pastor Chauncey Blossom, who was amazed to see the Kaiser truck unloading a complete Nativity scene. While many of the figures have fallen apart, the camel remains to guide travelers to Bethlehem, or in this case, to the historians' dinner.

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appalling condition." He supports the City Council putting a new measure before voters as soon as possible. Art Haigh, an infrastructure committee member, emphasized that some opponents have not taken into consideration the additional costs of car repair to Orinda households - repairs that would be prevented with better roads. Former infrastructure committee member Rob Kobal recommended that the council review spending priorities and have specific projects ready to go when money became available.

Mayor Glazer promised that last November's election was not "a surrender. We have this problem, and now we have to go back to it," he said. To that end, the City Council asked city staff to design a web-based survey on the city's website where residents could express their opinions on the infrastructure issue. It also reconvened a community group to look again at the report on the city's financial condition conducted by Stone and Youngberg and reconvened the infrastructure committee to advise them on infrastructure issues following the final public meeting.

The Orinda City Council meets on the first and third Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in the Library Auditorium.

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