

Fall can be a very beautiful and rewarding time in the rose garden. Unfortunately, some rosarians get busy with other interests and lose their dedication to maintaining their roses. They falsely assume that the growing season is over, and simply let the roses fend for themselves. Thus they miss out on some of the prettiest blooms of the season. In fact, we typically have roses up until Thanksgiving and sometimes even into December. This being true, we've got three more months of beautiful roses to enjoy. You can also have beautiful roses for three more months if you just stay the course. Let's get busy!

This summer has been somewhat up and down for our roses. We had a good amount of rainfall for much of the spring and summer. Generally speaking, our summer temperatures have also been rather moderate. Due to all of the rain, we have experienced some blackspot in our garden. We have succeeded in pretty much getting the blackspot under control for now, but unfortunately it is still lingering around on a few of our roses.

If you also have blackspot in your garden, don't toss in the towel. Stay on the offensive! If possible, remove all the infected leaves. Then spray twice a week with either Manzate, Mancozeb, Pentathlon, Dithane M-45 or Maneb. Once you start to see a real difference you can return to your normal spray program. Please be aware that blackspot spores can take up to 14 days to infect your plants, so you may continue seeing a few outbreaks for several weeks. Another good product for eradicating blackspot is lime sulfur sprayed at the summer rate (refer to the label for dosage). Once the summer heat subsides, you can try using Daconil. If used in hot weather, Daconil has a tendency to burn foliage on the roses. We also recommend that you do not mix Daconil with other pesticides.

September can sometimes be a very dry month in the tri-state area, so be sure your roses continue to get sufficient water. Usually 2 to 3 inches of water per week will do nicely. When watering your roses, make sure they will have time to dry before nightfall, as damp cool weather provides a perfect environment for rose diseases such as blackspot and powdery mildew.

Spider mites can continue to plague your roses until frost. Pale foliage is one sign to be on the lookout for, as mites suck chlorophyll from the foliage. If you suspect you have mites, inspect the undersides of your leaves, looking for small specs that resemble salt. If present, then you've got spider mites. You can easily eliminate spider mites by washing the undersides of your bushes twice a week with a sharp spray of water.

With winter on the horizon, it is important to remember that disease and insect free roses will have a much better chance of surviving in good shape. Therefore, do your best to keep your roses disease and insect free by continuing your preventative spray program. To give your roses a little extra energy, you can continue to apply your favorite liquid fertilizers. However, you should not apply any granular fertilizer after the first week or so of September, as most of your new growth will not have sufficient time to harden off before the first killing frost.

As fall arrives, it is a good idea to begin taking stock of your roses and consider which bushes might need to be replaced. If you wait until spring, it can be difficult to remember how each plant performed.

Remember to share some of the fruits of your labor with a friend or shut-in by taking them some fresh cut roses. It will surely brighten their day and make you feel extra good too! Finally, if you are interested in roses, why not consider attending one of our monthly meetings. We meet at

the Trinity Lutheran Church in Hixson. More information and directions to the church can be found elsewhere on this website. Hope to see you there!