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# ROSE CLIPPINGS

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Newsletter of the Rose Society of Green Valley

April/May 2011

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## From the President's Desk

Lots of good things this month, especially our speaker, Carl Sparfeld from the Green Valley Camera Club. Several new people attended just to hear him speak on photographing roses.

At the April Board meeting, we talked about the receipts of the Bake Sale (NICE JOB, Janell !) which made \$125.00 for us and the Garage Sale which brought in \$645.00 (THANKS JOEY, LEAELLEN, PAT H, PATTY GREEN, JANELL, BOB KAY, and I hope I didn't forget anyone. March is the best time for both of these fund raisers as the winter visitors are still here.

It was discussed that we have still have not found a suitable place to hold day-time meetings. Some are too small, don't allow refreshments, etc. However we plan to make a decision at the May Board meeting. If you have a suggestion on this topic, call me at 609-1319.

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## The Community Garden

*Dave Palmer from April*

The Rose garden is looking great at this time. I applied Alfalfa Tea to the rose garden a couple of days ago. It is the first time that I tried using that method. It is time consuming but should work out better than just tossing the pellets on the ground. I used about 130 gallons of Alfalfa Tea on the garden. I did not add other fertilizers or epsom salts to the mixture at this time although I could have if I had thought of it.

It is almost time to fertilize the garden again using Scotts 20-20-20 or bloom booster as some call it. Plus we will apply the Mills Magic Mix at the same time.

I see that there are a few roses that are beginning to bloom. Lots of buds on the bushes and so I expect the blooms to be spectacular very soon. Make sure you are watering 3 times a week as we are experiencing hot weather. Plus thrips and aphids are present. I noticed them at my own home and sprayed them today. Use strong streams of water everyday to knock off the aphids. You can use spray directly onto the rose bud and can also use soapy water sprayed directly on the bud to kill the Thrips.

**Presidents Desk; continued from previous column.** Care of the garden this summer was also discussed. (Have you stopped by to see the glorious sight of all those roses?) It was decided to continue using the assigned plot plan as before. Since we are few in number, it will help a lot if each person could take a slightly larger area this year. Weeding should also be done at this time. A sign up sheet will on the table at the May meeting.

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**May Meeting**

May 2nd is the date. This is our dessert buffet meeting and we would like small portions, extra dishes to share the goodies, & recipes to share. We will have a group discussion of "Best Roses for Green Valley" and we ask everyone to bring roses from your garden for a small Rose Show just for us.

Please sign up for the Garden teams for the summer. THIS IS IMPORTANT.

Thanks, everyone for all the hard work this year. We will commence again in September. Joey Z will lead the way to another wonderful ROSE SHOW.

REMINDER; A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, WE CHANGED THE TIMING OF THE TERMS OF OFFICE FOR THE ROSE SOCIETY. THIS MEANS THAT WE NOW NEED A CHAIRMAN OF NOMINATIONS BY AUGUST. THE NEW OFFICERS WILL BE INSTALLED AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY. PLEASE HELP. THERE ARE NOT MANY OF US AND IT MAY BE TIME FOR SOME PREVIOUS OFFICERS TO REPEAT. THANKS.

Karen Packer, President

## Our Friends Beneath Our Feet

By Jim Semmel, The Glen-Rose May 2009

Well, it's that time of the year again. We all need to start altering the care and feeding of our roses to compensate for the oncoming hot months. The standard practices of reducing fertilization, blasting spider mites with a garden hose, an increase in watering and the use of an extra thick layer of mulch are the main weapons in the defense of our roses from the 110 degree days to come. The last item, mulching has one additional beneficiary, our silent partner and hard working helper in growing beautiful roses, the earthworm.

Earthworms are truly the gardener's best friend as both the structure and fertility of garden soil are in their care.

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## April Rose Garden

As the weather begins to warm up in late March and early April, it is time to start stepping up your watering program. Deep water is the most effective. You should flood the beds if you water by hand. If you are using drip irrigation, you should have a minimum of 2, preferably 3 or 4 drippers per rose bush. When the temperatures are over 90 degrees, you will need to increase your watering to three times a week. Roses in pots will probably need to be watered daily. Always be sure to water well the night before you fertilize or spray your roses. This helps prevent any damage to your plants.

Through mid-May, we suggest you continue your fertilizing and spray programs. This will help prepare your roses for the summer months to come. You want to get maximum growth out of your plants now.

Apply Epsom salts to your roses. Recommended dosage is 1/4 cup per hybrid tea, grandiflora or floribunda rose, 2 tablespoons per miniature rose.

If you purchased potted roses, now is the time to plant them. Remember, standard roses need holes a minimum of 18 inches wide and deep, 24 inches is preferable. Miniature roses need holes a minimum of 12 inches wide and deep. Prepare your soil using 1/2 original soil and 1/2 organic material such as peat moss or compost.

Also you should be planning now to put down a 3 to 4 inch layer of mulch over your rose beds at the end of April or the first part of May. A variety of substances can be used for mulch. Putting down mulch will lower the soil surface temperature and conserve water by reducing evaporation. If the mulch is finely ground (rather than large bark chips) then it will also eventually break down into organic matter and enrich the soil. Water the mulch well when first applied to prevent wicking water up from the soil and drying out the soil.

As the rose blooms fade, "dead head" by removing the bloom down to a 5-leaf leaflet that has an outward facing bud.

## MEETING INFORMATION

Monthly meetings are held the first Monday of the month (see Upcoming Events for exceptions) at 7:00 pm (6:30 coffee social) in the East Social Center, 7 South Abrego Drive, Green Valley, Arizona.

Directions: From I-19 South, take Exit 65 East one block to Abrego Drive.

No meetings June, July or August

Dues are \$17 single/\$20 family per year payable in January.

Mail to RSGV, PO Box 309, Green Valley AZ 85622

Board of Directors meetings are held the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 am at the East Social Center. Rose Society members are welcome to attend.

### UPCOMING RSGV EVENTS

#### MAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Time: Monday, May 2, 6:30 PM East Social Center

Mini Rose Show

#### MAY BOARD MEETING

Time: Saturday, May 14, 10 AM at East Social Center

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The fertilized eggs develop directly into young worms usually within 30 to 60 days. Worms cannot release themselves from their cocoon, they must be set free from the outside by bacteria. If conditions are not right for bacteria to be present in sufficient strength to decay the membrane wall, extreme cold for example, the eggs will not hatch until the conditions are right, increasing the survival chances of the baby worms. It takes from 2 to 4 years for young worms to reach sexual maturity before they can add to the population of your rose garden.

So to have lost of these little guys working for you, just add organic material when planting or mulching, keep your garden watered and earthworms will make you garden their home. The over use of chemical fertilizers can create an acid condition in the soil that will have your local worm population looking for a more comfortable surrounding. Also most pesticides, especially fungicides, are toxic to earthworms as they are to many beneficial insects. Use pesticides sparingly.

Follow the earthworm golden rule: Treat your worms as you would want to be treated this coming hot summer, stay cool, and drink plenty of liquids. If you see lots of earthworms in your garden soil, congratulations! It's a sign of healthy soil, one of the key elements in growing beautiful roses.

# Rose Society of Green Valley

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# May Rose Garden

## Rose Society of Tucson's Monthly Guide of What to do in your Rose Garden

May is the month that you need to prepare your roses for the blistering summer heat.

The first and foremost effort that you need to make during the month of May is to get and keep the maximum amount of foliage on your plants. The first way to accomplish this is to cut shorter stems on any blooms you are taking in for arrangements or to give away. When "dead heading", only cut down to the first five-leaf leaflet, preserving as much foliage as you can.

The second part of this effort is to get some extra growth on your plants. Continue your fertilizing program through the month of the May. The best solution to use during this time is a 20-20-20 liquid fertilizer. You should also put on another dose of time release fertilizer before putting mulch down.

The next thing is adding mulch. By early May, you need to have a 3 to 4 inch layer of mulch down since the heat has already begun. Mulch helps to keep the ground cool and reduces the evaporation of the water you are giving your plants. It also helps keep the weeds under control. Possible sources of mulch are compost, redwood bark, pine needles, wood chips, shredded newspapers or aged manure.

Watering is essential right now. When the temperature is over 90 degrees water 3 to 5 times per week. Be sure you are deep watering, not just surface watering. Don't let the soil dry out between waterings.

Start keeping an eye open for spider mites. If spider mites infest your roses, you will begin to notice a dull appearance to the leaves. The undersides will feel sandy or rough. Fine webbing will appear on the undersides of leaves and in leaf axils. The best control is to spray the undersides of your leaves with a sharp spray of water every couple of days. Morning is the best time to do this.

# June, July and August Rose Garden

The hot summer days have arrived and there are a few tricks to keeping your roses healthy throughout the heat wave.

Hopefully by now, you have mulch down. Any all purpose mulch will work just fine. The idea is to keep the fine feeder roots found just below the soil surface as cool as possible. A 3-4 inch layer of mulch will help keep soil temperatures from soaring. Mulch also helps keep weeds under control. And as an added bonus, the mulch will break down into organic matter over the summer and will enrich your soil.

The main problem during the summer is spider mites. These are microscopic bugs that create little colonies among your rose leaves. They can be devastating to your plant if they are not caught in time. Spider mites quickly kill the leaves and the plant defoliates. The best way to spot them is to look at the undersides of the leaves. If you see webs and what looks like salt and pepper, or if the undersides of the leaves feel sandy, you have spider mites. You can kill them off with a miticide or by blasting them with water every two to three days for a week or two. Either way should eliminate them.

Keep up your watering schedule during the summer months. This is crucial since a missed watering can cause your plants to get stressed and this invites problems. The healthier the plant, the fewer problems it is likely to have. Remember, deep watering is best. Also, watering early in the morning is better than mid-day or afternoon. You don't want the soil to be soggy, but you also don't want it to get totally dry between waterings.

Continue to "dead head" at least once a month.

Apply a half strength liquid fertilizer once a month. As always be sure to water your roses well the day before your fertilize.

The other thing is to try to keep the weeds and grass from invading the rose beds. The less competition the roses have for water the better.

These marvels of Mother Nature are active surface feeders at night, removing organic matter, first broken down into a digestible form by microbes, from the soil's surface and continue feeding in the subsurface during the day. As they literally eat their way through the earth in your rose garden, they force themselves into small cracks, swallowing soil along with the deal organic matter that it contains and excrete a high quality humus, rich in nutrients and micro-organisms called castings. The channels made by earthworms are lined with these nutrients and make it easier for the roots of your roses to penetrate deep into the soil.

The first one-third of an earthworm's body contains its vital organs; the remaining two-thirds contain the intestine of this little round compost machine. Nutrients are always contained in soil, but not always in forms that can be readily used by our roses. When earthworms consume these unavailable minerals, the enzyme action in their digestive tracts makes them water soluble so they can then be absorbed by a plant's roots. In a 24-hour period, an earthworm can consume its weight in this organic material. An average size earthworm weighs about 1/4 of an ounce, which means that for every 64 worms that reside in your rose garden, they are giving you one pound of free castings, or fertilizer per day! Now you know where all the mulch and alfalfa pellets go that we place around our roses every spring.

According to *Worm Digest*, 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 the microbial activity in worm castings is 10 to 20 times higher than in the soil and organic matter that the worm ingests.

One of the amazing things accomplished by the digestive tract of an earthworm is that the soil which comes out of the pack end of an earthworm is closer to a neutral pH (7) than what went in the front end, regardless of whether the soil it is feeding on is above or below pH (7). This is achieved by the action of the worm's calciferous gland and the buffering action of carbonic acid. Also, soil that has passed through the intestine of an earthworm shows much more available phosphorus and potassium than the same soil which has not.

As worms rummage through our garden, they also break up the fine particles of our clay soil, which increases the space available for air and water between soil particles and improves drainage. It soon becomes apparent that encourage these little guys to call a rose garden home is in the gardener's best interest. There are several practices that we can follow to encourage earthworms to enrich the soil around our roses.

Worms live where there is food, moisture, oxygen and a favorable temperature. If they don't have these things, they will move on down the road. They will not tolerate soggy soil, are very sensitive to light and must have damp skin to survive. Earthworms are most comfortable in temperatures ranging from 50 to 75 degrees F. Upon learning this, a red flag immediately went up. How do our peak summer temperature affect earthworms? At the recent Phoenix Flower and Garden Show, I attended a "how to" demonstration on worm bins and composting and asked this question. I was told that during our hot summers, the feeding activity of earthworms is slowed by the heat but is not fatal, even when worm bins are kept moist and in the shade. The mulching we do, creates this cool, moist environment and the better job we do of it, the more active and closer to the surface our little friends will be during the summer months.

Water is also a major necessity of earthworms, as they contain about 80 percent water by weight and lost about 15 percent per day. Earthworms do not have lungs, but instead breathe through their skin. In order for this to take place, the outermost layers of an earthworm must be kept moist by the mucous they excrete and the water in the surrounding soil. If moisture is not available, they will dig deep into the soil to find it. This is why they emerge only in the cool of the night, when the evaporation rate of the air is low and retreat underground during the heat of the day.

When the soil is wetter than normal, after a rain for example, conditions are most favorable for mating. Baby worms are not born; they hatch from cocoons about the size of a grain of rice. All earthworms are hermaphrodites, which means a single individual can produce both eggs and sperm although its eggs much be fertilized with the sperm from another worm. When two worms mate, mucous is secreted around their bodies into which 5 to 15 fertilized eggs are deposited. As the worms crawl this mucous membrane is left behind to shrink and solidify to ifs final size just under the surface of the soil. This process is repeated until their sperm is used up. (Finished on page 3)

Yearly dues are due by January 1. Mail to RSGV at PO Box 309 Green Valley AZ 85622 or bring to the March meeting.

Name:

Address:

Email Address:

## Newsletter Information

**By Sue Rock**

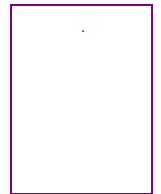
Please send a monthly report if you are an officer or a committee chairman. Send interesting information to share if you are a member.

The deadline to get the news to the editor is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. E-mail to Sue Rock at [philr@iname.com](mailto:philr@iname.com) .

Publication is 10 days before the membership meeting. The newsletter is published monthly September through May.

The newsletter is sent via e-mail to those members with e-mail addresses.

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