



The Rose Hip newsletter of the *Peninsular Rose Club*

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of each month (except Dec. & Jan.) 7:30 PM Elk Lake Baptist Church Hall,
5363 Pat Bay Hwy., Victoria. Email: peninsular@quillserv.com Website: <http://nurserysite.com/clubs/peninsular/>

March 19 2002

President: Ilean Spanos (383-2672)

Vice-President: Bev Matheson Treasurer: Fran Urlacher

Secretary: Edwina Bauer Past-President: Anne Williams

Phone Committee leader: Janice Lee Library: Joan Dobell

Membership: Bev Dobell Parlour Show coordinator: Vi Heaslip

(Helpers and judges needed) Doors and Sound System: Bernard Rain

Newsletter and Website: Trevor Inkpen

Message from the President:

Rose season is swinging into gear, and it's so tempting to tackle a new project and "fly at it".

But remember the number one rule at this time of year is not to get too enthusiastic and start doing too much, too fast. Start slowly, be kind to your body, take the time to do some stretches in the sun before tackling the garden. If it starts to hurt, my massage therapist recommends using a cold pack—but don't keep it in the freezer, keep it in the meat compartment of the 'fridge, that is the correct temperature for sore muscles. Use heat on the rest of your body for relaxation, but apply the cold pack to hurting muscles to reduce swelling.

The ARS newsletter this month has articles warning about bacterial and fungal infections from puncture wounds in the garden. Wear your gloves and long sleeves. If you do get 'stuck', flush the wound well with water and apply antiseptic promptly. At any sign of infection (swelling, heat, redness) hie yourself to your doctor without delay for a checkup & possibly antibiotics.

Keep your roses' health in mind as well. Between pruning cuts, it would be ideal to dip your secateurs in a bleach solution to avoid spreading fungal spores among the bushes. Clean up all the clippings and dropped leaves from the ground, and cultivate the soil lightly around the roses so the disease organisms can't survive to re-infect. Pull off leaves at the first sign of spots, and prune off any dead or diseased stems, making your pruning cuts neat and as flush to the base as possible.

Ilean Spanos

What to do this month: Late March

The forsythia is blooming, last chance to prune the roses

If the leaves have broken out, it's too late to spray dormant oil

If you spray fungicide, make the first preventative spray, but

read directions & be careful of burning new growth.

Last chance to move roses

Start brewing Alfalfa Tea: More details on the Web site

<http://www.nurserysite.com/clubs/peninsular/tea.html>

Weeding – get ahead of the weeds while they are young

Early April

Get mulch down on the beds before the perennials leaf out!

Plan your annuals, perennials and groundcovers

Start vegetable seedlings

Apply your alfalfa tea after buds have made 2" of new growth, or add 1 cup of Alfalfa meal and 2 Tablespoons Epsom salts around the base of each rose bush

Tie in the climbing roses

Watch the new growth on the roses, and rub off any new stems that are growing the wrong direction or crowding

If the weather warms quickly, look out for aphids on the new growth and buds. Pinch & squish, or spray off with water

Keep your secateurs sharp and oiled.

Events:

Sat Apr. 6 Victoria Community Group of the Arthritis Society: Easier Gardening Workshop, 10:00 AM - Noon Hort Centre of the Pacific 505 Quayle Rd. 598-2278

June 29 Mid-Island Rose Society Rose Celebration Lantzville BC See Vi for more information

June 30 Gabriola Islands 4th Annual Home & Garden Tour 10:00 am to 5:00 pm Jennifer Lynch (250) 247-9935 or email: lynch@island.net

July 6 **Roses and Lilies** Cadboro Bay United Church, Arbutus Rd. Report at the meeting.

Correspondence:

European cynipid gall

I am an entomologist working on cynipid galls of the wild and feral roses of Canada. One of my projects is to research the distribution and abundance of the European cynipid gall called the 'rose bedegular' or 'robin's pincushion gall'. At this time of the year, galls initiated last year are a mass of light brown hairs. The galls are usually a spherical mass and some maybe as large as an orange. Inside are small chambers containing larvae of the wasps that are about 8 mm in length. This gall is found on European *Rosa canina* or *Rosa eglanteria* in gardens or on plants that have gone feral. I am working on the parasitic wasps associated with this gall, along with colleagues in Britain, and we are anxious to compare attributes of the galls in their homeland compared to Canada. Galls are easily removed with a pair of snips.

I am writing to ask if you or some of your colleagues in the Peninsular Rose Club are familiar with these two roses that are known to be feral near Victoria and on Saltspring (and nearby) Island (s). Further, if any of your colleagues are familiar with this gall and might be persuaded to collect some for me, I would be much obliged. I have collected these galls near Victoria and on Salt Spring Island in the past.

Thank you, I look forward to hearing from you.

Joseph D. Shorthouse, Professor of Entomology Department of Biology, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario, P3E 2C6, CANADA

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Speakers Needed: We have an increasing number of requests for speakers on roses. Please contact Ilean 383-2672 to put your name on a speakers list.

Currently required: The Metchosin Garden Club May 10.

Website: The Peninsular Rose Club Web site has photos and articles by Club members, and issues of the Rose Hip. www.nurserysite.com/clubs/peninsular/ Please contribute items to peninsular@quillserv.com or 386-6227 (phone/fax)

This Month's Programme:

Feed the Soil, not the Rose - Trevor Inkpen

Rose health is dependant on healthy soil. The condition of soil is determined by its **nutritional content**, its **structure**, and its **biological activity**.

Nutritional content is most often measured by the availability of Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium (these are the N-P-K percentages that you see on fertilizers). To over-simplify, nitrogen promotes green growth, phosphorus promotes root, flower and fruit development, and potassium promotes sturdiness and resistance to disease, cold and drought.

But these are not the only requirements: also essential are calcium, magnesium, sulphur and a multitude of trace elements such as boron, copper, chlorine, iron, manganese, molybdenum and zinc. A good commercial rose food will contain a balance of the primary and the trace elements (check the label), or you can make organic fertilizer mix with bulk materials available from nurseries or feed stores (Borden's, Buckerfield's, Integrity)

Complete Organic Fertilizer recipe:

4 scoops of seed meal (canola and/or alfalfa) for nitrogen (N)

1 scoop of rock phosphate for phosphorus (P)

1 scoop of greensand and/or kelp for potassium (K)

1 scoop of dolomitic limestone for calcium and magnesium
(only dolomitic limestone has both calcium and magnesium, regular limestone does not)

Mix it all together, and that's it. For more quantity just double or triple the recipe. Keep it dry and you can keep this mix as long as you like. Add a handful to each planting hole, side-dress establish beds, or work it into new beds. When you apply it, it must be cultivated into the dirt to do any good, as it relies on the bacterial action of soil organisms to break the fertilizer down - it is a long-acting, slow release fertilizer.

If you live in an area with exceptionally acid soil, you can double up on the limestone, except around acid-loving plants such as rhodos, azaleas, blueberries and potatoes. For a faster action, you can add bone meal to the lime to provide a nitrogen boost, or mix in some commercial rose food. For clay soils you can add some gypsum (Gypril).

Additional magnesium is supplied by Epsom salts (magnesium sulphate), which is important to balance the action of the calcium in limestone. Too much lime binds the iron in the soil, causing iron deficiency (yellowing or chlorosis of the leaves), and balancing the magnesium with the calcium forestalls this.

At the end of the growing season, you want your roses to slow down their growth and "harden" for the winter, so cut back on nitrogen and increase the potassium. A last word—too much fertilizer is as bad as too little. An excess of any of these fertilizers (especially trace elements) can be toxic, so fertilize in moderation. This is why I like organic fertilizers like our mix and our alfalfa tea – they're naturally balanced, kelp meal and alfalfa are rich in trace elements, and it's very hard to apply too much of any nutrient.

Checking pH:

pH is a measurement of the acidity or alkalinity of the soil – on a scale of 1 to 14, with 7.0 being neutral. Roses are reputed to like a soil pH just on the acid side of neutral, between 6.5 and 6.9. Extremes of acidity (low pH) or alkalinity (high pH) are toxic to plants, while soils with pH of more than 1 or 2 units away from neutral have the effect of binding nutrients to the soil so that they are unavailable to the plants.

Heavy clay soil tends to be alkaline, while the soil of evergreen forests tends to be acid. Soil pH testing kits are readily available at nurseries and garden centers. Lime will raise the pH, sulphur will lower it. Repeated use of chemical fertilizers will tend to acidify the soil (lower the pH).

To tell the truth, I use very little chemical fertilizer, and as much compost and manure as possible, and I don't worry about pH. I subscribe to the theory that a soil with a high organic (humus) content will tend to balance out naturally, and the biological activity of the soil will release the nutrients and micronutrients that the plant needs.

Structure:

Heavy, clay soil can get so soggy that our plants suffer from having wet "feet". Growing in pure sand, we would have to water and fertilize constantly to replace what was flowing through and out to the ocean.

In the soil, all the action is in the microscopically thin film of water that surrounds soil particles. This is where the biological work happens and where most of the soil micro-organisms live.

A soil with good **tillth** has soil particles bound together in tiny clumps that maximize the area for the water film to adhere to, yet leave spaces between the clumps for air. This prevents roots from being waterlogged, but provides plenty of moisture for the root hairs to tap for the plant's use. With sufficient organic material, the texture of the soil improves. Heavy clay soils will gain

air spaces, and sandy soils will gain water retention. A soil with good organic texture will resist caking or hardening of the surface after heavy rains and in hot weather.

The “squeeze” test is a good way to check your soil’s texture. Grab a handful of moist but not wet soil, and squeeze it in your hand. When you open your hand, the ball of soil should hold itself together, but readily crumble when you poke it with a finger. If it flows through your fingers as soon as you open your fist, it’s too sandy. If it stays in a compressed ball and has to be broken apart by brute force, it’s too clay’ey.

The answer to both sandy and clay’ey soil is to add organic matter. The best source is the output of your own compost pile, if you are energetic enough to maintain one. Otherwise, look for aged horse or cow manure for application straight into gardens – but fresh horse and cow, or any chicken or rabbit manure, should go into the compost pile to rot first. Garry will disagree with me here - he regularly top-dresses with fresh manure.

There are plenty of stables on the Peninsula who are eager to get rid of their manure if you have transportation for it, or you can order it delivered by a number of trucking companies.

Manure, well broken down leaf mulch or compost can also be bought from C&F Landscape Centre, Trio Gravel, on occasion from UVic, or from municipal parks departments.

In general, bark mulch, wood chips or sawdust are not good additions for soil, as they are so high in carbon that they will rob nitrogen from your plants in the process of decomposition. Use bark or wood for paths, or compost along with a strong nitrogen source like chicken or rabbit manure, granular urea or fresh grass clippings until the wood is soft, damp and dark brown.

I am not a fan of peat moss. Once dried out, peat resists water with a vengeance. It lacks nutrients, and peat strip-mined from thousand-year old peat bogs is not a renewable resource. I am also not in favor of pouring sand into clay soil to improve drainage. In my experience, any amount of sand disappears without a trace, and I would rather put the effort into incorporating organic material into the soil and creating raised beds. The humic acid in compost will break clay up (with perhaps some help from added gypsum), and will give a biologically-rich as well as a well-drained soil.

Biological activity:

Soil is alive - and it has to be for plants to thrive. There is a complex relationship between the creatures (micro-organisms, insects, scavengers, predators), the raw materials (minerals, elements and dead vegetable matter) and the plants (green and fungal) that live in the soil. Our objective with compost and manure is to boost the biological life of the soil so that nutrients will be broken free of their chemical bonds and released to the plants. A soil that is alive will also buffer our plants against excesses and shortages of nutrients.

When you plant roses, move them or replace them, take the opportunity to dig out a good big hole, replace half or more of the dirt with compost and manure. This’ll give the ‘tired’ soil better tilth and boost biological activity. Put the old soil into the compost pile, and use it next year once it has been ‘livened up’

Once your soil is amended with lots of organic matter, and your roses are planted, add a mulch over top. Mulch conserves moisture in the soil and protects it from the sun, makes it easier to weed, and if you use an organic mulch, it will slowly break down into the soil to add organic matter

February Programme: discussion “in the round” of gardens and plans for 2002
The notes of the discussion are posted on the Web site at

www.nurserysite.com/clubs/peninsular/articles/feb2002.html

Bernard R: up to 110 roses, 2 new last year, climber Berries’ n’ Cream darkish red & cream blend. Golden Showers is unstoppable, thornless, has to cut off when it gets over the deck. Likes the Flower Carpets as ground covers in front of climbers. Prunes to keep below 1’, has attractive yellow-orange hips, don’t need to deadhead blooms June 1 ‘til November. White, Appleblossom, Pink. They can be trained as climbers.

Question: Looking for the ancestry of “Prom”, pinkish Hybrid Tea, short, shy bloomer.

Audrey B: If you find Hybrid Teas and Floribundas are too much work, try converting to Shrub roses—less disease (English ones get a bit) and bug resistant. Little problems of any kind, prune to 3’. Recommend Lichtkonigin Lucia, Austins, Meilland shrubs. Audrey will make a list of her favorites.

John D: new member, has 3/4 acre on border of park, unique plantings from former owner experimental farm worker. Wife has turned 30 roses over to John. He changes out about 3 roses per year—some are 50 years old. Spraying is a nuisance, but it’s a nice place to be on a sunny day.

Janice L: on Claremont ridge, (250 foot driveway—goal is to put roses all the way down driveway. Formal garden, mostly gardens, bark mulched., Arbor with Joseph’s Coat & Royal Sunset with climbers along the fence. Over 100 roses. Had a 100 year old arbutus which came down in the December winds. New rose this year Gemini: Cream with soft coral pink edge. Has

done pruning and clean up and mulched – last year was the first time for disease problem because of stress. Hopefully the mulch will help keep the disease spores down. 1–2 inches. Sandy soil, not much luck with minis.

Dorie C: Has a very small garden—first year spent building up soil, then some perennials, then got into fragrant roses. Has Double Delight. Likes lavender roses for the scent, but finds they are weak. Fragrant Plum Blue Nile, Blue Moon Might change two of them. Kay recommends Zephyrine Drouhin for growing in shade.

Ann J: Has a strata unit, challenge to sneak in plantings. Wants to put in a raised garden in back. Put in micro watering system last year, happy with it. Put in one new rose Pristine last year. Priorities – fragrance and continuous bloom, but now has a 50/50 mix of Austins & Hybrid Teas. Not having success with Minis. Goal for 2002 – get a gardener!

Anne W: Has a city lot, wants one of everything – tender perennials, NZ, Australian varieties. Likes Austins and Shrub Roses, doesn't like to spray. Took out a large fir tree, which has opened up shady areas. Has left stump and roots in place. Goals: Bring in soil and move things around. Mutabilis a favorite, Lichtkonigin Lucia growing 15'–20' up a tree.

Question: What is covered by upcoming pesticide ban – insecticide or fungicides as well?

Alternative 1: 6 skim milk spray tried by Orma. Does attract wasps until dry. Apply every 10 days. Vi reported to Orma that she had no blackspot last year using milk spray.

Edwina & John B: 1 acre started 1994 – went from 0 to 170 roses in three years, plus veggies and fruit—perennials and roses have to look after themselves. Doesn't like spraying. Crowding is a problem—Solitaire was looking bad, dug it out bareroot, replanted, now is healthiest rose—poor health was attributed to being too close to other roses. Will start to thin out poor performers. Really happy with Roberta Bondar. Royal Sunset, High Hopes Cl., Morning Has Broken (Yellow shrub from Heirloom long laster as cut flower) Plans to move Jeanne Lajoie, New Dawn, Westerland, and grow some BIG onions.

Kay G: Small city lot, with no garden 30 years ago, has improved bit by bit, got rid of lawn and now has roses with perennials, bark mulch. Planning doesn't always work, but accidents can be interesting. Favourites are Pink Japanese Styrax, Alicia (17'), columnar apples, veggies. Pruned the mature Rhodos and removed bottom growth (cutting out on some up to 12' high) leaving flowers and foliage at top. Mutabilis in bloom in February. Favorites: Summer Wine Cl. Blooms a lot in clusters of 6 or more, slightly frilly, coral-amber, bright stamens, continuous. Problems with deer, will eat anything, dahlias and rhodos included. Garden is work in progress, always thinking of something new. Likes lilies, plants for winter colour. Shrub - sarcozza Good for cutting and bringing into house, fragrant, tiny shiny leaves, fragrance.

Question: Treeguard makes a thin film on any plant, so bitter that deer will be discouraged. But stored over the winter it can create white granules in container. Does anyone know how to reconstitute it once granulated?

Cathy J: has 8 roses in pots – Lanii, Tuscany Superb, Francois Jurandel, Martin Frobisher, Fru Dagmar Hastrup.

Jenny J: moved in 5 years ago, inherited an “easy care” garden – Pieres Japonica and Yuccas only. Has been digging and put a rose garden in

front side, spring bulbs, keeps plodding along. This year, grew mimosa from seed.

Orma L: 11 years, yard was 100% rhodos, in full sun. Got rid of them by going to garden club and offered them for free to anyone who'd dig them out. Started putting in roses, and had as many as 150. Not much luck with minis. Has arthritis, so she has been reducing the number of roses, 8 climbers, and a lot of shrubs—the shrubs are difficult to prune because of having to reach over the top – hybrid teas are easier to prune, Last summer and water problem, looks at the garden in a different light. Switching part of garden to BC natives for lower water and maintenance Got one new rose, Teasing Georgia. Any rose that doesn't live up to expectations gets given away. Has 25 roses that bloom continuously from May–December. That is paying her back for all the work. Wishes for no Blackspot, last year was the first times in 30 years. Has hard-pruned the roses and put down mulch. Favourites are Valencia, Perdita, The Lady, Austins, Elegant Beauty, Warm Wishes, L'Aimant, she likes the Kordes and Fryer roses for disease resistance. Will try water gel in soil for drought resistance and compare one bed to another.

Advice: Don't decide you want a rose because you saw it at a show, any rose can produce ONE good bloom. In the garden may be very different—get advice from others,

Bev M: Small property on W Saanich Rd, gets wind so roses have to be hardy. Roses planted in pots are happy for 2–3 years and then need to be planted in ground—roses respond well to replanting. Soil is awful, back yard gets morning sun. She would like to renovate the beds into raised beds, but sewers will be coming right through her back yard, so the raised bed idea on hold until after the excavation. Maintenance year this year –toss out poor performers to make space.

Ruth L: Grows roses under Western Cedars—a challenge. Grows Minis and floribundas, (Anne Jackson asked her about expert house calls for Mini growing) She is used to Ontario where you can forget about the garden until March. No plans for new roses yet. Likes lilies, spring bulbs

Pearla A: Coping with wet soil in her location, Planning to open new beds. Daughter going out with gardener from Butchart's, Pearla hopes to get some help from him. She has 21 roses, mostly Hybrid Tea, had bad black spot last year. Hasn't pruned yet – usually prunes in late fall and Feb. Trying different pruning as an experiment. Looking for shrubs and perennials for planting new beds this year. Grows a lot of fruit,

berries and veggies. Doesn't spray, treats roses only with soap. Enjoys herb garden, likes relaxing in garden, hopes for some advice from Club members.

Bev D: Loves roses – has had a home for 6 years near Camosun. Was originally like an English Country Garden, Bev had a courtyard installed in front, and is now looking for roses to grow up cedar terrace/arbours in courtyard. There are two rose beds beside the arbours. Back yard 50 x 150 has another rose arbours, cottage-style garden shed like a dollhouse. She would like to perhaps plant some Golden Showers. Goal is to make roses spectacular. Likes Austins, wants to try some Shrubs, need to know more about soil.

Dodie & Garry H: Home on Portage inlet 110' triangle at fork in road – 6 plots for growig roses. 1/2 of the lot is taken by Japanese cherry tree, cedar and greenhouse. Soil is poor, all clay no topsoil – they get 2–3” standing water in rose beds when it rains. They are avoiding Hybrid Teas, going for shrubs and minis, 60 – 70 roses altogether. Most pruning is done for this year. Last year, tried climbing minis with good results. Favourites: Jeanne Lajoie, 3 – 4 Robusta, Burgund, Bonica, 8-9 Austins. Watering system was installed last year – 75 drips, Goals for this year – replace some of the Hybrid teas with Minis, Pillars or shrubs. Has a Mutabilis which is showing a reverse of the normal progression of colour (got from UBC).

Joan D: Has a 50 x 100 lot, 105 roses, a lot of success with minis. Minis are fussy, need to get quality plants in the first place. Don't bother with the “supermarket specials”. Has clay soil, which she has amended. Has a problem keeping Sandalwood. Will be pruning roses right down this year. Pruning climbers are easier in November. Mulching is a help. Joan is trying two new Romantica roses this year.

Ilean S: Small city lot, 190 roses, ran out of room so has appropriated neighbors' lots little by little for perennials, bulbs, roses, a little of everything. Have dug out 6 non-performers to put in some of the potted roses. Prefers scented roses, favourites: Mme. Isaac Periere, Gertrude Jekyll, 2/3 of the way through pruning, crabgrass in the perennials is a problem. Establishing a new raised vegetable bed in neighbors back yard, has found an apartment-bound gardener to help out on weekends. Soaker hose irrigation. Disappointed by own-root Austins, finds it hard to keep minis. Plans: defeat crabgrass, divide and thin perennials, move roses from pots to the ground