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Keeping Your Garden Roses Healthy and Disease-Free

Topics Covered:

Down with Deadheads: What Is It and How Do You Do It?

Dreaded Diseases: Five Ways to Head Off Rose Diseases

Funky Fungus: What To Do When Your Roses Feel Fungi

Mildew Madness: Three Easy Way to Rid Roses of Mildew

Dealing With Blackspot

Persnickety Pests: Ten Creepy Crawly Enemies of Roses

Zoned Out: How to Decipher Zone Rules When Planting Roses

Keeping Your Garden Roses Healthy and Disease-Free

Down with Deadheads: What Is It and How Do You Do It?

There is nothing like a rose. The sweet smelling scent they produce might just be enough to get your nose stung by a pollinating bee, or another type of insect when sticking your nose into one!

It doesn't matter if it's a wild garden rose, old rose, or a modern breed; they are beautiful to look at, and a delight to your smelling senses. If you're wondering now that you've planted your new rosebush, how do you get more roses to bloom for a couple of years, then take this rose advice to heart--by deadheading them.

What is deadheading a rosebush? The simple answer is that by deadheading you're cutting off the older dried up roses that are dead. Deadheading encourages new flower growth for its next growing season. Using the deadhead method is typical for the new modern breed of roses that are genetically engineered.

Older roses are usually pruned, which is a different type of care for roses, and wild roses are left most of the time for a look of wildness in form. Also, for the older type rose varieties at the end of their season they will form hips or seeds that will need to be left, this will help them grow again in the next years season. Always be sure on the type of rose plant, whether you need to let hip, prune, or deadhead. It makes all the difference.

By carefully deadheading your rose bush next year you'll have great looking roses because you've helped the rose bush save some energy. The formation of hips on them requires the bush to spend a lot of energy that it shouldn't have to. Most bushes of any type are finicky, and require maintenance. So expect to care for your roses by cutting, or deadheading, for a couple of years.

How do you deadhead?

Read these 2 tips on how to deadhead them for the first 2 seasons of growth, but remember to always consider your zone areas, and if in question consult a good book, talk to your local florist, or ask around for some local help from a qualified rose grower. It might be necessary to do all three for the sake of your rosebush.

Cut at a 45 degree angle with a sharp pruning tool, back 3 - 5 leaf branches downward from top of bloom. This cut will be off the main branch.

Cut the leaf set of stem that is facing the outward direction. This will be the high side of a cut, on the side that the leaf set is on.

The optimum leaf set removal for the first years trimming is a 3 bunch, but 5 are ok too. The goal is to try to remove as little as possible for the first year's season. Also, it's vitally important that you start looking to deadhead your rose bushes at least 3 - 4 weeks before it starts to approach the end of its growing season.

No matter what zone you live in because it's now the end of the growing season for your rosebush, take some time to get it ready for the winter. It's vital that you do. After all why go to all of the time and expense of buying, planting, watering and caring for your plant from the beginning, and then deadheading it, and letting it languish in the winter and die? Remember bushes require loving care and attention.

Here are a few more tips for caring for your roses.

Clean away debris such as paper, old sticks, or any other garbage that's not supposed to be under the plant.

Use a good spray on it to kill any nasty bugs or bacteria that could kill your rose bush when it's lying dormant in the winter.

Apply a good type of fertilizer to the base of it, but make sure to reduce the Nitrogen in whatever fertilizer you use. It will burn the plant and cause other types of bacteria. Leaves from your yard will work nicely as mulch for your bush. Check leaf types that are okay to use.

Cover with a heavy burlap sack to protect the top of it.

It does sound like a lot of work to have a breath taking rosebush, but next year when you walk out and uncover your roses, you'll find that the effort you put into it will have been well worth it. You'll see the wonderful site of a new leaf branch growing gracefully out of the old from last year. Have fun being a dead header to your new rosebush.

Dreaded Diseases: Five Ways to Head Off Rose Diseases

As the old saying goes, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Happy, healthy roses are roses that never have to deal with ailments such as Japanese mildew, powdery mildew, black spot, and other icky pest and disease problems. In order to prevent these problems, there are things you can do to reduce the likelihood of your roses falling victim to these common problems that affect roses.

There are many ways to solve disease problems once they start, but these solutions can often be too little, too late, resulting in the need to get rid of the plant altogether and start all over again. This can be tiresome and expensive. It is much better to simply take care to prevent the diseases in the first place. Here are five ways to head off rose diseases:

Choose your roses carefully. Be a smart shopper. Choose roses that look healthy. Two for one deal at the end of the growing season may not be the best choices, as they are already on their

way out. It is better to pay a little bit more for a rose that you know will be successful than to have lose money on failed "bargain" roses.

Also, find varieties that are considered low maintenance. These roses are types that are usually resilient to disease and climate hardship. These roses will naturally fend for themselves, making it easier for you to care for them and prevent diseases. Shrub roses tend to be the most resistant to diseases, as are some of the varieties of landscape roses. Hybrid tea roses, however, tend to need the most care of any rose variety, and can more easily become the prey of debilitating backyard diseases.

Plant and care for your roses properly. Properly planted and cared for roses that receive what they need are less likely to suffer from disease. Roses need five to six hours of sunlight per day (there are shade tolerant varieties that can get by in partial shade, with three to four hours), and about an inch of water per week.

Make sure that watering is done deeply so that it reaches the roots. Roses are thirsty plants, in part because they need so much sunlight. Even though they need lots of water, however, roses do not like standing water. Improper drainage around your rose plant can lead to rot and black spot.

Also, water in the morning so that leaves have time to dry throughout the day. This will prevent fungal diseases from developing. Make sure that you have a good compost or well rotted manure that you use in planting (a little bone meal is also a good additive) and that you carefully follow the planting direction that come with the plant.

Mulch around your roses. Mulch will keep the soil down, preventing soil born disease from getting on your plant. As an added bonus, mulch will slow weed growth. The best mulches are organic mulches that protect in two ways: it keeps down diseases from the soil, and it also provides more nutrients to the roses, helping them remain healthy enough to ward off other diseases. Good mulches to use are pine needles, wood chips, and grass clippings. These mulches should be applied in a one to two inch thick layer.

Trim the rose plants regularly. Pruning is a good way to improve the health and the appearance of the plants. Additionally, regularly check for yellowing or diseased parts of the rose plants. Trimming off areas that are affected immediately can help you prevent the disease from spreading. This will allow you to head off disease and still save the plant.

One of the best ways to prevent powdery mildew is to create a special concoction to spray on roses. This can be a very common problem that you can head off if you start in very early spring. The mixture is one gallon of water, 2 tablespoons of baking soda, and one tablespoon of Murphey's oil soap.

Start in early spring and spray every two weeks. A watering wand is good for this job (do not just dump the water over your rose plants). Once the temperature reaches 80 degrees Fahrenheit, stop spraying. You should be able to avoid powdery mildew the entire growing season.

Funky Fungus: What To Do When Your Roses Feel Fungi

Most rose diseases are caused by attacks on your plants by different kinds of fungi. The good news is that no matter what type of fungi is damaging your roses, the treatment options are virtually the same.

To start, there are several things to do to prevent your roses from attracting fungus. One way to avoid attracting fungi is to water the soil, not the actual plant. Fungi will be attracted to any moisture on leaves, blooms and stems. . Check on a regular basis for exposed canes because fungi can find its way into the plants this way.

Try to keep the plant clean and remove any plant litter, particularly any fallen leaves and petals that gather at the base. Any canes, leaves or blooms that are suspect should be removed right away. You should always throw these away or burn them. You should not use suspect plant litter in your compost pile, in all likelihood this will only add to your problems.

There are different ways to spot fungi. The fungus *Diplocarpon rosae* causes the fungal disease known as Black spot. Aptly named, this disease starts with small black spots surrounded by a yellow halo on the leaves and can eventually cause a complete defoliation if you do nothing to treat it. This fungus spread through splashing water and infection can occur if the leaves are wet for a few hours.

Powdery Mildew is another kind of fungus that attacks rose plants. Young leaves can curl and die and young canes may not grow as fully as they should. You can spot Powdery Mildew from the white coating on buds, stems and leaves. This mildew spreads rapidly during humid weather.

The fungus *Botrytis Blight* affects the flower buds. Buds can decay and even die. The fungus is grayish-black in color and the lesion will develop below the bloom's head. You need to cut off and remove any decaying or dead blossoms to prevent the spread of the fungus.

Rust, which looks just like the rust that develops on your car, can first appear on the underside of leaves. If not treated, orange and brown spots can also develop on the top surface of leaves.

The Brown Canker fungus can attack any portion of the plant that is above the ground. In a worse case scenario, brown canker can kill an entire stem. If you spot red or purple spots on the new canes or gray-white lesions on more mature stems then you might be dealing with Brown Canker.

If you discover that your roses are already infected with fungi you should try to remove any infected leaves, blooms and canes. You could spray with a fungicide. You can purchase this at your garden center or make up your own homemade version. A mixture of water, baking soda and dishwashing liquid is very effective in curing fungus problems.

Most fungus spreads through splashing water so it is important that you are vigilant in removing decayed leaves and infected canes and blooms. Not removing these makes it very easy for the fungus to spread from part of the plant to another or even from one plant to another one. It is

also important that you plant your roses in an area with good drainage and air circulation. Shady spots will only encourage moisture and fungus attacks.

Fungicide should really be your last option. Roses do not take to pesticides well, so it is important to try other options first. Remove plant litter, prune properly and ensure the drainage is good before resorting to a chemical cure. In extreme cases, though, fungicide use may be necessary.

If fungus is a concern, then you should try to plant disease-resistant species of roses. Though there is no guarantee, with the proper care you should be able to avoid most major fungi infections. Some locations are more prone to fungus than others, so if you live in a damp, humid climate you will need to be alert about fungus issue and you should take the time to research disease-resistant varieties.

To prevent major fungus issues, you need to be observant. Dealing with fungus problems as soon as you spot them will make all the difference.

Mildew Madness: Three Easy Way to Rid Roses of Mildew

Mildew is the bane of all dedicated Rosarians. The most common type of mildew is powdery mildew, which is caused by the *sphaerotheca pannosa* var. *rosae* fungus. Powdery mildew is characterized by white or grayish powdery growth on the leaves, shoots, buds, and sometimes even appears on the petals of rose bushes.

These small patches of mildew spread in white strands across the plant's foliage. As the fungus draws moisture and nutrients from the leaves, the leaves will begin to crinkle and fall.

Powdery mildew is not directly caused by the presence of free water on surfaces of the plant, but instead seems to thrive on hot, dry weather. Direct overhead watering during the midday may actually help the plant by breaking up spores that are released during the day. Fungicides may also be effective, although their application must be well timed in order to be effective.

The other most common type of mildew is downy mildew. Downy mildew is caused by the *Peronospora sparsa* fungus. Unlike powdery mildew, downy mildew thrives on moist and humid conditions.

Downy mildew is most commonly observed under the leaves of the plant. Other characteristics include purple, red, or brown spots on leaves, usually followed by yellowing of the leaves, then loss of leaves. Downy mildew is hard to control. Fungicides are not very effective, although regular pruning for increased air circulation and reduction of humidity can be helpful.

If you prefer to garden without the use of harsh fungicides, here are three easy ways to rid your prized roses of these common types of mildew.

Prune, prune, prune! Pruning is one of the easiest ways to keep your plants healthy and vigorous, and to prevent the formation of mildew on your prized roses. Practicing good pruning techniques allows your rose plants to receive good air circulation and even sun light distribution, which is crucial for preventing mildew.

During the pruning season, when the plants are dormant, prune each plant, cutting above new buds so that growth is directed outward. You should inspect your roses carefully on a regular basis throughout the growing season. Remove any dead or diseased shoots or stems. Carefully dispose of the rose debris by either burning it, or sealing it in a bag so it cannot spread disease.

Also, when you are determining plant placement, make sure your rose bushes are spaced appropriately. It is recommended that you space hybrid teas at 3 ft distances, and larger rose bushes at 4 ft. This allows your rose plants to dry out faster between watering, thus preventing conditions that may make them more susceptible to mildew. Make sure your plant will receive enough sunlight. Rose plants that receive little light will produce thin leaves, be much more susceptible to nutrient deficiency, and will become ideal candidates for developing mildew.

Water roses carefully. Your watering practices are crucial in preventing the growth and spread of mildew. To prevent mildew, water your roses well at the root level, especially during hot weather.

Try to keep water from getting and settling onto leaves, particularly before night falls. Most importantly, make sure you water regularly. Rose plants that receive insufficient water at the root level will become dehydrated. Dehydration is one of the most common triggers of mildew fungi.

Try concocting this easy home remedy for your roses. Some gardeners swear by the power of stinging nettle. Make a stinging nettle spray by gathering stinging nettle, placing them in a sack or old pillowcase, and crushing the leaves.

Place the bag in a bucket of water and let sit in a warm location for roughly a week. When it's time, strain the stinging nettle concentrate, and dilute it with five parts water. Pour this solution into a spray bottle and use it on your rose plants once every two weeks.

If you don't have access to stinging nettles, try this easy to make baking soda-Based solution for fighting off mildew. You will need the following ingredients:

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 gallon of water
- 1 tsp regular-flavored Listerine
- 1 tbsp liquid soap
- 1 1/2 tbsp baking soda
- 1 tbsp vinegar

Mix one cup of water with baking soda, soap, Listerine, and vinegar. Add these ingredients into one gallon of water, and pour the solution into a plant sprayer. Make sure to shake well so the ingredients combine. Spray your rose bushes, saturating them thoroughly.

Dealing With Blackspot

Blackspot is a prevalent rose disease that is caused by the fungus *Diplocarpon rosae*. Should your rose bushes develop the telltale signs of Blackspot, remedial measures must be taken immediately. Otherwise, the bush will begin producing fewer blooms and the rose's ability to survive the winter months will be jeopardized.

Blackspot is easy to recognize in its latter stages, but might not be noticeable in the beginning. In fact, by the time blackspot starts showing signs, as few as 3 to as many as 10 days have already passed since the fungus first germinated.

The first visible symptom is black-colored spots on the leaves. As the disease progresses, a yellow ring forms around the black spots and the spots spread through to the underside of the leaves. Spore-producing spots will be visible upon close examination. The black spots will continue to grow and soon the entire leaf may turn yellow. Many of the yellowed leaves will begin falling off the bush.

Blackspot is a fungus and as such, it spreads. It'll easily jump from one bush to another for as long as it's left untreated. The fungus can survive on the fallen leaves through the winter, and also on the cane where it has been infected so growers cannot rely on the harsher weather to kill it.

Like most fungi, Blackspot thrives in warm, moist environments. Spores will germinate after 7 hours of being wet and when the ambient temperature is between 65 F (18 C) and 75 F (24 C). The warmer the weather, the quicker the disease spreads.

Proper care of your roses is the only way to prevent this disease from developing or spreading. Since spores can survive on fallen leaves, it's crucial during the fall season to rake up and remove all dead leaves from the ground and cut away any infected canes.

In the spring, when roses are still dormant, head to the nursery and purchase wettable sulphur and a soap containing fungicide and then spray all rose bushes thoroughly with both. The spores cannot adhere to the sulphur, so the leaves are protected whenever they're covered. Because the sulphur will wash off in rain it's important to reapply whenever necessary.

The fungus needs a wet environment for germination, so take extra care to keep the leaves moisture-free. For example, plant roses in sunny locations as opposed to shady places so that the morning dew evaporates more quickly. Use sprinkler hoses when watering so that only the roots get watered and not the leaves.

Water early in the day, so there's plenty of time for water to evaporate. Prune the bushes regularly so that air can flow freely among the leaves and be sure to allow plenty of space between bushes for the same reason.

When roses exhibit symptoms of Blackspot, first cut away affected parts and throw clippings in the trash, not the compost pile (remember the fungus on leaves won't die). Then spray all the leaves with sulphur.

If given a bit of tender loving care, your roses will produce beautiful flowers year after year!

Persnickety Pests: Ten Creepy Crawly Enemies of Roses

If you are having problems with your roses, insects may be responsible. They can do a lot of damage if you do nothing to chase them away. Here is an overview of ten creepy crawly enemies of roses and some ways to identify them.

1. Aphids

Aphids are the most frequent problem pests. They like to make themselves at home in the growing tissue of roses (buds and shoots). Low or even moderate levels of aphids will pose little threat to your roses, though you will need to keep a close eye on how they spread. High numbers of aphids produce an excess of honeydew, which will encourage the growth of mold and they will eventually blacken the rose leaves.

If you have very high numbers of aphids, the size of the flowers may diminish and buds may be killed. There are some natural enemies to these pests, including lady beetles and syrphid flies. The creatures will help keep the population growth under control. You can try removing them from the roses with a spray of water or with insecticidal soaps. Aphids are usually only a problem during the spring and early summer and usually you do not have to resort to insecticides to control them.

2. Spider Mites

If your rose leaves are stippled or dried up and falling off, then spider mites may be the problem. Spider mites are so tiny that you will probably need a magnifying glass to spot them. Their presence is usually the result of dry, dusty conditions. You can try to control spider mites by reducing dust and ensuring that your plant has sufficient irrigation.

3. Fuller Rose Beetles

Adult beetles will chew away at the flowers and leaves of your rose bush. You can usually detect their presence by the ragged edges of your blooms and foliage. They feed during the night and hide during the day on the underside of leaves. Pesticides are not effective in dealing with these insects, so the best solution is handpicking these beetles off.

4. Thrips

Thrips damage the blooms by leaving brown streaks on the flowers. They are a huge problem when rose bushes are planted close together because they can move quite easily from one plant to another. They are usually attracted to light colored or white roses and cause a great deal of damage. It is difficult to control thrips with pesticides because they are really only effective at the development stage. The best thing to do is clip and dispose of infected blooms.

5. Caterpillars

There are some types of caterpillars that will feed on rose leaves. Usually the damage is not that threatening to the rose plant. Simply remove the rolled leaves and prune any damaged buds.

5. Rose Slug

These are the larva of a sawfly, but they resemble caterpillars because they have legs. You can wash these off with a forceful spray of water or let one of their natural enemies take care of the problem for you.

7. Leafcutter Bees

Leafcutter bees make semicircular holes in leaves and take this material back to their nests. You'll just have to put up with this, as there is no effective way to combat them other than killing the leafcutter bees. It is recommended that you don't kill bees since they are natural pollinators.

8. Rose Curculio

Rose Curculios prefer yellow and white roses. They are about a quarter of an inch long and go about punching holes in the flowers and buds. The larvae feast on developing buds so the buds are killed before they even get a chance to open. If you have an infestation of rose curculios, you can rid them by using an insecticide from your local home or garden center.

9. Flat headed Borers

Flat headed borers can cause the canes to die back. They may kill canes or the entire rose plant. You need to remove any material that is infested with these critters and keep the plants healthy by not over pruning in the summer months and ensuring there is sufficient irrigation.

10. Scale Insects

Scale insects also pose a threat to the canes. Scale insects have armored scales and look like small, grey rounds or ovals. These creatures don't really move because they have no legs for most of their lives so they are there to stay once you spot them. The best way to combat scale insect infestations is to prune away infected canes and put some pesticide oil on any remaining canes.

Zoned Out: How to Decipher Zone Rules When Planting Roses

You're thinking about planting roses for your garden or to decorate outside around your house. If you want to spruce things up a bit, but are not too sure how to go about it, and then read about a few tips that will guide you on your journey of rose planting. It's not that hard to do, you just need to be aware of how to use a map and a few other tips to grow beautiful roses.

The map is meant to be used as a general guideline that you'll need to seriously consider before planting any roses outside in your garden or around the yard. However, don't be confused or fooled, some roses do well in many different kinds of climate. The best knowledge for learning how to locally grow roses in your area is to talk with others in your hometown, such as your plant and gardening center or a florist. A good reading of any quality book on how to grow roses can be found at the library or a bookstore.

A little history about how maps came into use for roses is necessary to be a fully informed Rosarian!

The first map ever created for information on plantings was the USDA Hardiness Zone Map, and it came from the combined effort of Henry Skinner in the 1800s when he worked with the US National Arboretum, and the American Horticultural Society which produced the valuable map of information on the climates in the US. It was a generalized map of meteorological information broken into zones of large areas for the US.

It was the first time people had some type of guideline to go by for planting and growing, not only decorative plantings, but crop information as well. This was necessary because many people were on the move throughout the country, and many didn't know the local areas growing capabilities.

Later in 1960 the map was revised and was named the Plant Hardiness Zone Map with more detailed information, and included all of North America. A few reasons for changing the map were that there was more technological ability to map weather trends, as well as data. Also, the weather patterns were changing too. More detailed information such as the names of plants and their cold climate zones, along with an alphabetized listing of plant names were included.

Here is how the map is broken out into zones for the US.

South West: AZ, CA, NV, UT

South Mid-West: AR, KS, CO, ILL, LA, MS, MO, NM, OK, TX

South East: AL, FL, GA, MA, NC, SC, CO, TN

North West: OR, ID, MT, WA, WY

North Mid-West: IA, MN, NE, ND, SD, WI, WY

North East: CT, DE, IL, IN, KY, ME, MD, MA, MI, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV

Alaska: Listed separately but in the North Mid-West

Hawaii: Hawaii Is not listed in any category of the US geographic regions

The major areas are further broken out into sub areas of temperatures. Starting with zone 1 which is the coldest area of -50 degrees F and graduating up to 11, which are the warmer areas

of the US. Areas of the regional zone is further broken out into sub zones of temperatures represented by a combination of numerical and alphabetized designations such as 2a, 2b, and 3a, 3b, and continuing on. Zone 11 is the area where annual local temperature is continually over 40 degrees F.

Like the unfamiliar settlers before, you'll need to know the map. There are places on the internet where you can order one and print it out to use as a guideline for growing your roses. Remember to stay updated on any changes to the map.

With your handy map in hand, go and speak to people in the know about growing roses in your area. The map is helpful, but it's only a general guideline. Different things concerning your local climate can affect how roses grow in your garden or around your house.

Professional horticulturists use them and they are termed micro climates. Situations such as how much smog or pollution conditions, soil feasibility, or even any catastrophic conditions such as the eruption of a volcano, or a man made problems of pesticides can affect how or if your roses grow.

Take the time and understand the map, and use any information you can find in books, or from a gardening or floral provider. Also, use the advice of locals for growing your healthy beautiful roses. Most of all enjoy the adventure; it's a sweet smelling one.

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