

GARDEN SPOT

Some rose varieties require special care



MARTY FIGLEY

I hope the cold spell we had last month didn't destroy your roses. It seems as though more people are becoming interested in roses, especially the old-fashioned and improved varieties that don't require so many chemicals and are more cold-hardy. Hybrid teas, grandifloras and others, however, are still popular and need winter protection and specific care to be kept in tiptop condition.

Now is the time to begin winterizing these beauties. Begin with a "housecleaning." Frank VonKoss, a rosarian from Birmingham, suggests to put on a heavy glove and run your hand up the cane. This removes the foliage and eliminates lots of fungus spores. Clean the beds by raking away all the fallen leaves; apply a dormant spray to discourage disease.

"Use the largest rose cone if you have room and don't put anything in it," he says. "Bean hampers filled with oak leaves also work well; other leaves mat down too much."

Roses continue to grow until the temperature reaches 28 degrees Fahrenheit, he also said.

Some rose growers mound their plants with 10 inches of soil, others use loose mulching material — straw, salt hay, leaves or evergreen boughs. Rose cones need to have a weight on top to keep them secure and the top may need to be removed for ventilation and temperature control.

Cut canes of hybrid tea roses and grandifloras to three feet, or tie them together so they won't whip around in the wind. Tree roses need to be buried — your nurseryman can advise.

Winterizing

People have devised unusual ways to winterize their roses. Some people who grow roses in containers report them into three gallon plastic containers (in regular potting soil mixed with 4-cup of Canadian peat or another product to help retain moisture) in October and take them into an unheated, windowless garage. They are then watered well. In January, when they start sprouting, they are again watered, then fertilized and watered in March. In early April new shoots and canes begin to emerge. When the weather is warm they are again returned to the patio in the large containers.

Some people cover the soil in the pots with plastic; others don't. I have heard of success stories and failures with this method, but it may work for you.

Another person related that she buried her miniature roses in the compost pile for the winter where they benefited from the heat and survived beautifully.

Omer Trembley of Farmington Hills

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grows his tall "Perfect Moment" and "Rio Samba" roses in potting soil to which he adds "a bucket of Canadian peat." He waters the plants twice a week during the season and fertilizes with Peters every two weeks until Sept. 1. Half barrels hold the roses perfectly and are rolled on a dolly to the unheated garage just before the first frost. In February or March the leaves begin to fall off and they are watered, then in March or April, after danger of frost is over, they are returned outside.

These methods, although not fool-proof, illustrate the creativeness that gardeners use to keep a favorite plant growing.

Rose winners

All-American Rose Selections has announced the 1996 winners. "Carefree Delight" is a landscape shrub that opens to carmine pink petals laced with a creamy white center. "Livin' Easy," a floribunda, blooms constantly in ruffled apricot orange. "St. Patrick" has chateau buds that slowly unfurl to reveal a yellow gold flower with shades of green; it is a hybrid tea. "Mount Hood," a grandiflora, has ivory white petals with a medium old rose scent.

All of these roses have been bred to be disease resistant and have been grown in test gardens in the United States. They have passed the rigid evaluations by rose experts for two growing seasons.

Rose books

Rosarians seem always eager to know about new rose books. Patrick Taylor has written "Gardening With Roses: A Practical and Inspirational Guide" (Timber Press, \$17.95), in which he shares his thoughts about the best ones to grow. The encyclopedic section includes cultural information as well as clear descriptions, habit and size, zonal information, and color and fragrance. Color photos enhance the descriptions.

"The Gift Book of Roses" (Storey, \$14) comes in an attractive sleeve. The small, pretty book contains poems and thoughts for all seasons of the year, plus a few old-fashioned recipes for culinary treats. One tidbit: "The world is a rose; smell it and pass it to your friends" — a Persian proverb.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859. Her fax number is (810) 644-1314.

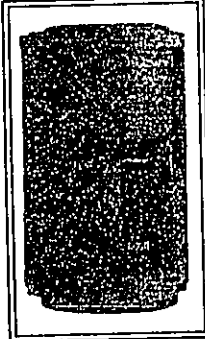
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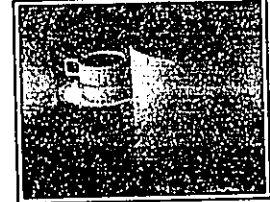


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