

Magic Garden Roses

Welcome to our 4th newsletter. For all our Victorian members – were did our Autumn go? All that heat in Summer and now it looks as if we have launched straight into winter. The roses have had very little time to adjust. We still have thousands out in flower here and everything is still looking like a Spring flush. Another good week or two of this and I expect they will go into an earlier than expected dormant period. Only last week we had been blanketed in decent sized hail which is very rare for Autumn.

On the other hand, I have spoken to good friends who live on property just below Canberra and over there it refuses to rain in a normally good rainfall area. It seems every year we are having to re write the old books.

Growing tips can often vary depending on growing conditions related to area and climate. Keep in mind that any information given on how to grow roses, whether it is from me or any other source, can vary so much, so always ask questions. For instance – if you were planting bare-rooted roses here in Melbourne, you should keep the roots wet right up till when you are planting them. Water them in well and then – no more water, just eave it to nature. Once the ground is wet and it is holding moister, you should not have to be watering on top of the rain we get. The roots are at their smallest and can easily rot out with any extra water. With too much water they also won't produce more secondary roots.

Planting bare rooted in dryer areas does not mean you have to water a lot more either. Once



they are watered in at planting time, just keep an eye on how damp the soil is. If the soil persistently dries out quickly, just add some mulch to keep more moister in the soil. I would never recommend this to customers in Melbourne as there is good rainfall here in winter and this type “over watering” is another sure way of losing bare rooted roses. It all comes back to what I said earlier, that the roots can rot out.

Here is something to remember – when roses have just been planted out as bare rooted plants, you are likely to have more success having them edging on the dryer side than having them bordering on the “bit too wet” side. That does not mean

letting the roots dry out while planting. I have to reinforce that no matter what the conditions or what area, you must always keep the roots very wet at time of planting and when you first receive them.

Changing now to our customers further North. Established roses will still flower on through

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winter - I have seen in Queensland roses already flowering at the end of August . So they simply don't go dormant. This means that they have to be consistently cut back hard every time they finish flowering, this keeps them at a level of producing good stems to support new growth. I know this situation very well, my background is four generations of rose growing in glasshouses where roses, even in the cold of Holland, don't stop flowering all year. The Queensland climate is very similar to rose growing in glasshouse conditions. Typically we can get problem situations where it is dry and cold or situations where it's hot and wet. Roses however can be grown successfully in any conditions found in Australia, just e-mail me and ask for advice specific to your area. That's what we are here for and I can offer advice for any situation that you may be in.

Whether you are planting new roses or simply not getting the results that you were hoping for with your established roses – contact us as we are here to help. Just remember that roses can be grown very successfully in any situation.



Problems often occur when roses are first planted, generally because people give these roses too much attention just after they plant them out. At this time all they need is a little moisture and that is all. Don't add too much fertiliser at first as the roots are at their smallest at this stage and simply cannot handle strong fertiliser. It's a bit like giving a baby an adult's plate of food and expecting them to eat it all! Don't be fooled into thinking that the more fertiliser added the better the rose will grow. Not so! Just add a little over the top of the soil after you have planted the rose and never feed it under the roots. Within a year, the roots would have tripled or more in size and you can then go onto a normal pruning and feeding program. Again as I mentioned earlier, if you're not sure please contact us. There is

nothing worse than to hear a sad story of roses killed with too much kindness.

I have also been getting quite a few e-mails from people worrying about the state of their roses. A lot of photos have been sent to us and they all stack up to the same story. The rose's leaves were going yellow, black spot and mildew was starting to appear and they are not producing any more roses. Unfortunately some people had already been to garden centres which have sent them home with an entourage of sprays, fertilisers and soil conditioners. Yes it is true that Triforine is the remedy for your fungus problems and yes, some leaves are yellow because the soil is lacking fertiliser but at this time of year we should be saying goodbye to our flowering roses. If there are any buds left from the season just passed, it's a bonus. Certainly from now on, don't worry if you have these problems. It's just

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the part of the natural cycle of a healthy rose plant. You only need to look around and see the trees are all starting to do the same. It is a waste of your hard earned money to spray at this time of year as the foliage is hardening up and Triforine cannot uptake in old leaves anyway. Fertilising roses now can start to promote new growth which is dangerous for roses at this time of year as the new soft growth can rot and cause die back. Frosts will also kill off any new buds and shoots as well.



Let's just look forward to the pruning season. In the next newsletter, I will have a close practical look at "pruning your roses". Don't be tempted, especially in Victoria, to start pruning just because its getting a bit colder. Let them harden up a bit and have a rest.

Some people think that by pruning early, the quicker they come back which is not true.

I hope this newsletter has been informative and we ask you, as always, to send us an e-mail on any topics and questions you may want me to cover. That's the basis of all our newsletters "people asking questions."

Keep in mind too. We have nearly finished digging all our standards and we will be starting on our bush soon so to those people that have placed orders – we are ahead of schedule and for those people that are thinking about ordering – just drop us an e-mail or call us about what you may need.

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