

Summer Rose Care in CNY Gardens

By Jim Wagner

By the time you are likely to read this article, (early August), your gardening enthusiasm may not be the same as it was a few weeks ago when you had peak June blooms and possibly even exhibited in a rose show competition. Now, we should be thinking about the first phases of pre-winter care to make our roses as healthy as possible to improve their winter survival.

Through a series of concise text and select photos, hopefully this article will help answer questions you may have and what to do when something expected or unexpected may take place. Although this will not be all inclusive of summer rose care, this will cover several different areas, some possibly anticipated and others that you may never experience.

Blackspot (*diplocarpon rosae*) and Powdery Mildew (*sphaerotheca pannosa*)

Whether you have grown, or are growing, or expect to be growing roses, Blackspot is likely to be one of the first diseases that you may experience by mid-summer. Blackspot, as the name implies, initially starts as small black spots on the lower leaves of the bush. Then yellow margins around these spots can extend to the whole leaf and gradually work up towards the top of plant if adequate controls are not practiced and/or weather is conducive to this fungus developing. When this occurs, promptly remove such leaves and dispose of in your trash. If this is not controlled, it may weaken the plant's best chances of winter survival.

In contrast, Powdery Mildew is a fungus that likes the newer growth and buds nearer the upper levels of the bush, starting out with slightly blister-like areas on upper surfaces of the newer foliage. Later, leaves become twisted and curled and then both the upper and under sides of the foliage becoming covered with white spores. When I find a cane or group of canes that are seriously disfigured, I sacrifice some of future blooms by cutting away the disfigured areas and depositing in my trash. This is likely to occur more when we have hot and humid weather and continues into late summer and early fall. For both Blackspot and Powdery Mildew, the application of a fungicide early in the spring and continually doing so every 7 to 14 days (or other time periods stated by the manufacturer) should help control both of these fungus diseases.



Crown Gall (*agrobacterium* spp.)

Crown Gall is a bacteria that may attack a bush below and at ground level and on roots or a cane a few inches to a foot or more above ground level, usually dark colored at or below ground level and light brown walnut shaped, cauliflower-like growth (sometimes more than one on the same cane). Although some people try to save the plant by cutting away the growth and applying Clorox or other disinfectant, the chance of the plant surviving is very limited. It is best to totally remove the bush from the garden and dispose in the trash to reduce the possibility of this spreading to and eventually killing nearby plants.



Cane Borer Damage



Cane Borer damage appears as small round holes in a cane where a tiny insect called a cane borer drills a hole into the open end of cane and deposits its eggs. These hatch and work their way down the cane, eventually killing that cane and possibly all or a major part of the bush. To reduce this possibly when doing the spring and fall pruning and when cutting a bloom and/or deadheading (removing of a spent bloom) where the diameter of the cane is greater than a No. 2 pencil, apply Elmer's White Glue (but not school glue) to the area where the cutting of the cane took place. Otherwise, damage of the cane borer may

not be noticed until after stripping the leaves during the fall cutback or not until the following spring when the damaged cane has become dried out and woody. If the damage is noticed during the growing season, you can gradually cut back pieces of the cane to see if you can find the tiny borer. Then remove that portion of the damaged cane that is above where the drilling of the cane borer has stopped.

Suckers - Long Canes; No Blooms

Have you ever had what seems like super tall canes that never produce any flowers and the foliage that is usually a lighter color than the original bush? If so, you likely have sucker growth. If there are just two or three such canes and the original plant looks healthy, cut out these canes at the Bud Union. If the original plant is large you might remove up to four such canes but if any more than that, remove the entire bush.



Rose Rosette Disease (sometimes referred to as RRD and/or RRV)

The June 2016 SRS Bulletin included an article written by one of our members several years ago and a full page in color showing contrasting views of both healthy and diseased examples of this disease. About that time we had established a contact with a person at Cornell that could help us determine whether we had Rose Rosette Disease (RRD). I was designated as the SRS member to provide and exchange information with this contact with her preferring to correspond with just one person.



To start the process, she requested that we send her photos of plants we suspected might have RRD. During June we sent her multiple views of five different suspected plants. From these photos she requested samples where there was evidence of anywhere from stunted and deformed blooms to two that had clusters of very short and sharp thorns (most likely have to have RRD) to send to a lab in Oklahoma where tests were completed. On July 15 we received a report that one of these samples was definitely RRD and that Syracuse had been added to the national map indicating that we had RRD in at least one of the roses in the garden. After taking the samples on July 1, each of the plants in question were dug up and placed in plastic bags for disposal to prevent the spread of the tiny air borne mites carrying this disease.

All of these plants were on the east side of Mills Garden. From a personal standpoint, I felt that the Gazebo may have acted as a barrier preventing these affected plants from reaching the west side of the garden while plants observed with this disease in 2011 and either 2013 or 2014 were on the west side of this garden, with the Gazebo likely acting as a barrier for those to enter the east side of the garden.

One of the recommendations that has been suggested is to establish a green barrier on the prevailing wind side of one's garden which would be the west side of the Mills garden. Should you feel that you might have this disease and would like an additional opinion, feel free to contact your local Consulting Rosarian and/or other knowledgeable rose grower or nursery.

Water, Water, Water!!!— A must from spring through fall until the ground freezes.

Some of you may have read the article in weekly magazine insert June 8, 2016 edition of the Eagle Bulletin or similar supplement captioned "*Mild winter? Not for many area plants and trees*" indicating that the dry spells we had last year, paired with warm winter spells with no snow cover this year, put the available soil moisture levels very low.

Based upon the amount of rain I had in my rain gauge in 2015, June with 9.6 inches of rain was the only month with an abundance of water while in June 2016 we only had 2.0 inches of rain and July has been very hot and dry. From May through November 2015, the amount of rain received was 3.8, 9.6, 3.5, 1.6, 4.3, 3.9, and 1.3 inches of rain with the result our plants entered last winter with moisture levels far below the suggested minimum of 1 inch per week or 4.3 inches per month. As we tend to be misled by the amount of rain a quick 5 to 10 minute heavy shower brings, one should have a rain gauge in an open area where you can check and record the amount of rain that fell in the past 24 hours



Semi-Drought 2016 - Abandoned 1931 Rose Garden, Thornden Park, Syracuse, NY

For our Mills Garden volunteers that looked across the drive from the present Mills Garden you may have noticed burned out (dried up grass) areas of what was once a rose garden dedicated in 1931 and later abandoned (possibly around 1940). On July 15 there were a group of students from the Summer Start Program coordinated by Miranda Hine that was cut short because of a brief thunderstorm with the result that Miranda, Carl, and I discussed the above and other things. Miranda then advised that these were the pathways of brick (or something else) that were left in place and covered with a likely limited amount of soil. When the semi-drought of 2016 came, these were the areas to first show the lack of adequate rainfall. Following are a couple photos showing different views of this former rose garden taken by Mary Frances Piraino on July 6, 2016.

Photo credits: Jim Wagner, Deb Holihan, Mary Frances Piraino