

## **THE ABC'S OF GROWING ROSES**

*By: Ted W. Mills, ARS Consulting Rosarian and Judge*

Every one of us started this life learning how to make a success of our relationships with one another. Who among us can forget that day in kindergarten when we were introduced to learning our abc's? It was a time of adventure and that thrill has not left us as we continue to improve our knowledge.

As I thought about an article for our rose society newsletter, my thoughts went back to that part of my early life - learning my abc's. When it comes to the art of growing roses, we can liken the process to observing what kindergarten taught us years ago. Keep things simple and don't be burdened with minute details. Please permit me to express a few of the abc's of growing roses.

### **THE A'S**

**Announce to yourself that you are committed wholeheartedly to growing and loving roses, for without this commitment, failure cannot be far behind.**

**Anticipate problems that might arise such as insect and fungus invasion and do something about it hurriedly. Don't wait for the "horse to leave the barn" before the gate is locked.**

**Ascertain that you will not overdo the hobby by trying to grow too many bushes when your work schedule will not provide you sufficient time or space. It is better to grow within your limits rather than flood the yard with scores of bushes that will receive inadequate attention. In other words, know your limits and stick to what is manageable.**

**Accelerate your spray schedule when destructive forces show their ugly head. Treatment to diseased or damaged plants merits full and rapid attention and only through concerted effort on the part of the rosarian will a cure be accomplished.**

**Always seek help from a Consulting Rosarian when individual efforts fail. It is their commitment to help the novice growers when the situation demands their expertise.**

**Adhere to the label instructions of chemicals used in spraying roses. Never overdose your plants. Manufacturers developed these chemicals under strict guidelines and know best how much dosage is required.**

**Arrange to join the American Rose Society if you have not done so. Within that organization a wealth of rose information is available that will make the chore of rose growing become a pleasure.**

### **THE B'S**

**Be on guard against the wiles of choosing cheap and weak plants. Many failures have resulted due to the rosarian's attempt to save money by purchasing plants that will not endure the ravages of insect and disease invasion. Roadside flea markets and fruit stands are not usually dependable outlets for buying plants. Stick to reputable garden centers who know how to take care of roses when they arrive from the wholesalers.**

**Brag on your competition in rose shows if they produce blue-ribbon roses. It's the name of the game among rosarians to help one another and to show pride when their fellow growers rise to the top in growing expertise.**

**Believe in yourself that you can succeed in rose growing. After all, self reliance is a cardinal virtue in the quest of any goal in life. Never let a single season of poor results or a avalanche of beetle invasion or an abnormal plague of blackspot eliminate your desire to produce good roses. Remember the first A in this article and keep plugging. Such commitment will surely spell eventual success.**

**Beware of pretty pictures in rose catalogues. There are some "dogs" within the pages. Before ordering, inquire of rosarians who have grown the rose that you plan to order if you are in doubt. Ratings on roses are available in handbooks furnished by the American Rose Society. These ratings are based on actual performance of the stated rose. Check it out if there is doubt. A Consulting Rosarian can usually be of help.**

**Break the habit of inconsistency. If there is one thing that this article attempts to get across to the grower, it is the fact that the rosarian must be consistent in all his duties. If it is feeding - feed on a timely basis. If it is spraying - be consistent in your schedule. Never attend to matters haphazardly or address them just "when you have time." The person who finds his roses in the Court of Honor can be adjudged a person of consistency. He or she fertilizes regularly. Their deadheading chore was timely performed and their watering operation left nothing to chance. In other words, there was a time for every phase of work in the rose garden.**

#### **THE C's**

**Concentrate your efforts on producing the best possible roses that time and effort can afford. Call into being the wealth of information that is available in the art of rose culture. Don't hesitate to use libraries and the files of the American Rose Society. Visit their web page and learn from the pro's the secret of growing award-winning specimens.**

**Crave to be the best. Don't settle for mediocrity. Champions were once novices and there is no reason you cannot achieve blue-ribbon success. The "shoulder to the wheel" approach is not out of style yet. Be not discouraged by temporary setback. Everyone stumbles. It's the fellow who picks himself up that succeeds.**

**Capitalize on your mistakes. Don't become discouraged if the rose crop looks sickly. Do something about it. Maybe it's lack of water. Maybe there is insufficient sunlight or inadequate feeding. With diligence there is reward. Try and try again and finally the beauty that awaits will come your way.**

**Consult fellow rosarians when discouragement envelops you. There is no more considerate group than those who join you in rose meetings. They are not a selfish lot and provide a world of help if only asked.**

**Consecrate your wonderful hobby of growing roses by sharing them with other people - especially shut-ins who are infirmed. It will enhance the thrill of growing God's most beautiful flower and make you feel good all over.**

**The above are but a few of the abc's of growing roses. Take them to heart and consider them as "stepping stones" to succeeding in this wonderful hobby.**

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