

Rosemania Recommends:

Turning Those Hot Summer Days into a Spectacular Fall Bloom.

by: Robbie Tucker

Spring has passed us by and with it goes the big flush of bloom we enjoy every year. While many see the hot summer months ahead as the most difficult for growing roses, I see them as a huge opportunity to guarantee my best roses come fall.

The single most important thing you can give your roses this summer is plenty of water. A common mistake is to water every day but to only give the roses a small amount. I would prefer to see you water less frequently, but make sure the ground is deeply watered. Deep watering will ensure deep roots. Frequent but light watering will cause your plants to grow a large number of surface roots and not the deep roots rose bushes need.

One way to reduce the amount of water you need is to add **Soil Moist Water Crystals** to your planting medium. These tiny crystals absorb a great deal of water and swell to 200 times their dry size, reducing plant waterings and evaporation of moisture from the soil. They are highly recommended in hot climates. Be sure to prehydrate them before adding to your soil.

Don't forget that your roses are heavy feeders and you will want to continue a good fertilization regiment throughout the summer. I like to use **Mills EasyFeed** as it is a complete fertilizer containing fish, seaweed, chelated iron, and Epsom's salts as well as the right balance of NPK. Since time is always at a premium in today's fast-

moving world, I usually feed every three weeks. I mix one tablespoon of **Mills EasyFeed** in one gallon of water and apply the entire gallon to each rose bush. If you have a large garden, this can become a fairly big chore if you are mixing one or two gallons at a time. Some rosarians use 30 gallon trash cans to mix up large batches and then dip out by pails. Personally, I prefer to use the **EZ Flo Automatic Fertilizing System**. The 3/4 gallon tank on the EZ Flow will hold up to 5 lbs of fertilizer (Enough to treat 80 plants without recharging.). Simply add one tablespoon of water-soluble fertilizer to the tank for each bush you intend to treat. Top-off the tank with water, attach to your faucet, and start fertilizing. The EZ Flow will automatically add the fertilizer to your garden hose as water passes through it.

If you are not using Mills EasyFeed, you should consider using some **Sequestrene Chelated Iron**. Roses need iron to keep their leaves deep green and healthy. Usage is 1 teaspoon per gallon or water. Do not apply iron more than 3 to 4 times in a growing season.

Mid to late summer is time to again apply **Clearex Salt Leaching Solution** to rid your beds of any salt build up. Many of you have written or called to say what a difference this has made in your established beds. I am also getting tremendous feedback on **Liquid Karma**. If you haven't tried this supplement, now would be a good time to add it to your liquid fertilizing regiment. I use one teaspoon per gallon of water.

Don't slack off on your preventative spray program. Yes, it is hot outside and care should be given not to burn the roses or overheat the rosarian. Be

sure to water your roses well the day before your spray. Thirsty roses will "drink" too much of the spray material through their leaves causing burn. Never spray before the dew has evaporated or spray material will be diluted. Also, do not spray so late in the day that it gets dark before the spray has time to dry. I get a lot of questions asking what to do when it rains after spraying. As long as the spray dries on the plant before it rains, your plants are protected. If the rain begins before the spray has dried, you need to reapply. DO NOT try to spray your roses using a hose-end sprayer. These are not accurate enough for this purpose and will waste a tremendous amount of expensive chemical.

Lastly, be sure to cut roses to enjoy and to share with friends. Adding **Chrysal Cut Flower Food Sachets** will keep your cut flowers fresh in the vase for an entire week. Each sachet will treat 1 pint of water.



Robbie Tucker has been growing champion roses for over 15 years. He is past District Director of the Tenarky District and he continues to serve the American Rose Society and the Nashville Rose Society as a consulting rosarian and a horticulture judge. He is Co-Owner of **Rosemania** and has helped thousands of rose lovers learn to successfully grow roses in all geographical areas. Please feel free to contact him by email at : questions@rosemania.com.