

Rosemania Recommends: Spray Programs That Work!



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We get a lot of questions at Rosemania. They range from the most novice beginners to the long time grower. Without a doubt, the most common questions have to do with spraying roses - what chemicals to use, how often to spray, how to knock out disease, etc. You get the point.

One recent article that drew a great deal of response and answered a lot of questions dealt with spray programs. With the heat of summer and all the challenges of battling disease and insects, now might be a great time to review that topic.

Many people, myself included, find caring for roses to be a great hobby and almost therapeutical. That one exception is spraying. Regardless of claims made by rose companies of "disease resistance", most roses require a spray program to prevent disease such as blackspot, powdery mildew and rust. The key word to remember is "prevent". Once your roses become infected, left untreated you can generally count on loosing most of the leaves. No leaves means NO ROSES! While you can spray to eliminate such problems, the best strategy is to prevent them from happening in the first place.

I don't like to spray any more often than necessary. That is why I have chosen products that only need to be sprayed every two weeks. For gardens of 50 roses or less, a practical program would be *Banner Maxx* sprayed every 14 days. I also mix *Mancozeb* (or *Manzate*) with the *Banner Maxx* (both at full strength) every other spray. *Banner Maxx* is very economical when you take into consideration

that one teaspoon will make three gallons of spray solution. This means a one pint bottle will make almost 300 gallons. That is less than 25 cents per gallon and the shelf life of a bottle of *Banner Maxx* is 5 years if stored properly.

It is easy to stay on a regular schedule if you choose a spray day that generally is good for you. For me, that is usually Sunday. If it rains on Sunday, I spray on Monday but keep my regular day (Sunday) in two weeks when it is time to spray again. If it rains after you have sprayed, the plants are protected IF the spray had dried before the rain.

For those who want the best preventative spray program available regardless of cost, consider alternating *Compass* with *Banner Maxx* every 14 days to prevent the fungus spores from building up a resistance to the use of only one systemic fungicide.

I don't use insecticides unless I have an insect problem. The trouble with most widely available insecticides is that they don't just kill the aphids, white flies and other chewing insects. They also kill ladybugs, green lacewings and other beneficial insects that eat aphids and spider mites. Overuse of insecticides will cause you more problems than solutions, so use them only when they are needed. I can highly recommend *Orthene* and *Merit* for control of most chewing and sucking insects.

It is important to make sure your roses are well hydrated before you spray. To do this, get in the habit of watering well the day before you normally spray. I spray early in the morning or late in the afternoon when it is cool. It is best to spray after the dew has burnt off in mornings or before it gets dark in afternoons. Be sure to use a spreader-sticker in your spray mix. The natural oil in rose leaves will cause some high surface tension between the spray solution and the rose leaves. This is what causes the water to "bead up" on the leaf like water does on a waxed table. Unless this surface tension is bro-

ken, the spray will not evenly cover (and protect) your plants. *Indicate 5* has been the spreader-sticker of choice for many years and I can't recommend it enough. A quart goes a long way. Simply mix your chemicals in your sprayer and add the *Indicate 5* last. Only add enough to turn the water pink. Once it stays pink, you are ready to start spraying.

Be sure to choose a sprayer that is right for your garden. In most cases, a 2 gallon pump sprayer will work well. If it takes you longer than one hour to spray your roses from start to cleanup, you don't have the right equipment. For large gardens or for those who want the best sprayer on the market, you cannot beat the *Spotshot*. The *Special Rosemania Version* has been customized to our specifications. The 50 ft. hose enables the user to cover large areas without moving the sprayer while the 30' wand is the perfect length for getting the under-side of leaves while minimizing stooping and bending. For small or large gardens, the *Hudson Fog Professional* is a great choice. This sprayer runs with electricity so you must have access where you intend to spray. The good news is that you can stand 10 feet away from your roses and easily cover them with the fog produced by this wonderful sprayer. It also uses much less chemical than any conventional pump spraying system.

Last, but most important, please wear proper safety equipment when spraying your roses. No pesticide, not even home made remedies are good for your lungs so wear a pesticide respirator any time you are spraying. I would also highly recommend eye protection (goggles or safety glasses with side shields) and protection for your skin. *Tyvek coveralls* are fantastic for this purpose. They can be used many times before simply throwing them away. For hand protection, there is no better product available than *Nitril Disposable Gloves*. Each box comes with 100 gloves. Use once and throw away. Always remember to be considerate of your health, the environment and your neighbors when spraying.