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ROSE CARE IN SPRING

By Paul Voykin

In the North Shore area I wait until about the second week of April to uncover our hybrid tea roses. (We cut the roses back every late fall, tie them, and then heap dirt mounds around them. The final job is covering them with straw for the winter.) Once the straw is taken off in the spring, the tea rose bushes uncovered, and the ground levelled and raked, we prune all dead wood off. Sometimes though, we wait about ten days or so before snipping off dead cones and useless branches. This gives us a chance after a rain or two to clearly see what is dead, if anything. However, we do spread right after the spring uncovering, exactly two handfuls of a chemical fertilizer, usually 10-6-4, but any other nutrient combination of nitrogen phosphorus and potash such as 10-10-10, 10-8-6, 10-5-5, etc. are just as good. Be sure you stay away from the trunk and close roots at the trunk base. Spread the two handfuls in a circle around each rose bush. No nearer than 6 or 8 inches to the trunk base of the rose bush. Don't work the fertilizer into the soil. Leave it alone after spreading the fertilizer on top of the ground in a circle around each bush. Admittedly, it looks a little odd at first, but in no time at all, the 10-6-4 breaks down and the spring rains slowly wash the nutrients down into the root zone. Do exactly the same thing again in July right after July 4th holiday. Never later. Otherwise, the rose plants might be too soft going into the winter. And don't worry please about some expert telling you that the harsh chemical salts in the "hot fertilizer" will harm the roses. That's bunk. Just follow my procedure. In 17 years I've never lost a bush to this theory. There is something else you must diligently do if you want the best roses in your community. Give the roses a good spray once right after the uncovering in early April and then spray from **May to September** every week with a good pesticide formula. This is very important. Here is my formula and I have never found one better. It was given to me by an old and wise rose expert on his death bed.

MANZATE for blackspot
ISOTOX for insects
ACTI-DIONE for mildew

Use one tablespoon of each per gallon of water and mix. Also, every two weeks, include one half a teaspoon of a systemic called BENLATE 1991. Next fall, I'll advise you in detail my simple old fashioned method of putting roses to rest for winter. (This method was also given to me this time by another friend just before he expired.)



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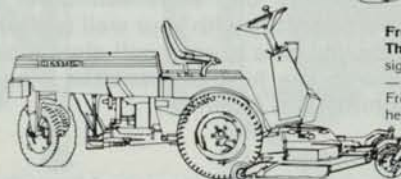
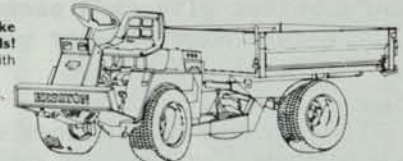
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An aerial view of the 18th green at Fort Lewis Golf Course, Ft. Lewis, Washington. The idea came from a member of the Ladies Golf Assoc., Kathy Hassell. She felt that the Military Golf Course should do something to commemorate the Bi-Centennial. The green is 6500 sq. ft., Superintendent: Ernie Bilger; Manager: Gene DeGenere.