



Macarthur Rose Newsletter

Vol 29, No: 6, April 2023



Neutrog

A huge thank you to everyone for responding so quickly to the text and email messages about the arrival of the Neutrog orders. Your response at such short notice is greatly appreciated.

Due to your promptness, the five pallets that arrived on Friday morning - unexpectedly - were all distributed before 11:00am on the Saturday.

Unfortunately, we have no control over the delivery logistics and the arrival of the orders is always unexpected despite strenuous efforts from both Neutrog, Chris Vine and myself. We all try very hard to coordinate and organise an orderly delivery but it seems out of reach at this stage.

Many thanks to Chris Vine for once again offering his warehouse for the delivery and distribution. Due to the erratic arrival times, it is often very inconvenient for Chris to receive the deliveries. His support, despite the personal inconvenience for him is greatly appreciated.

Now that the Neutrog orders have arrived, I trust that you are all enjoying the benefits to your garden. Again many thanks for your promptness and willingness to turn up at short notice to collect your order and help with the distribution.

The Neutrog shop is open once again and you can start thinking about your spring delivery. Remember that the Spring delivery will be used in your garden over the summer growing season.

Dear *Rose Friends*

It is with great sadness, that I report that Pauline Jelich recently passed away. Pauline and Jim Jelich have been our patrons for many years. They have supported the Macarthur Rose Society both financially and socially. While Pauline had been unwell for a while, she maintained a keen interest in roses and in supporting the Rose Society. Our deepest sympathies go out to Jim on the loss of Pauline.

After the heat of early March we are now slipping into Autumn. This is a wonderful time in the garden. We can spend long hours without the weather chasing us inside. It is also an important time for our soil. It is time to test, prepare and organise the garden for the next growing season. Graham Wright provides us with some information about what to do during the autumn on Page 2

There is a small article on the key principles of soil health on page 3, reproduced from The Spruce an website based in the USA. While their winters are much harsher than ours, they do offer some very solid, peer reviewed and interesting advice.

We had a fantastic turnout for the Camden Show with new exhibitors 'having a go' and putting up their roses. Gary Crawford displayed his beautiful Kardinal and Jamie Crosariol, who is our newest member, put up a great display of Julia's Rose demonstrating its different stages. Well Done Jamie and Gary. We look forward to you both continuing your exhibition career.

On pages 4 and 5 there are some photos of the entries from the Macarthur members. Maureen and Ian Thackeray did us proud - winning the best display in the Show. It was a stunning display to see on the show bench. Her vase of Dr Bruce Chapman and Joyce Abounding were also outstanding. Maureen also did very well in the Floral Art section of the Pots and Plants exhibition. I have included two photos of her floral art.



The Easter Show is coming up over the next two weeks. It is worth visiting the show to see what really good roses look like. The competition is open to everyone and many people who are not in the rose society enter roses. It is also a great way to view roses that you may want to grow. I encourage you all to go along and see the magnificent displays.

Yours in Roses

Judith

Cultural Notes - Graham Wright

It was really uplifting to see a number of our members, and some from outside of our ranks too, having a go with exhibiting at Camden Show. It showed that people had the confidence to participate and most importantly add to the display. In view of the erratic weather conditions of recent months it was a fine effort.



Shows such as Camden will continue to offer opportunities for people to gain those early show experiences. They will stand the test of time but I am not so sure about other shows. Already a number of horticultural societies have folded. Without being alarmist I have to say that unless we find office bearers for the Rose Society, particularly State Secretary, our wonderful old organisation will fold too.

Now back onto the cultural matters. April should reward us with the best blooms of the year. Milder days and cool nights allow the flowers to mature more slowly. As a result they will be bigger and the colours will be richer. This will not automatically happen unless we continue to be active in the garden.



It is getting a bit late to apply Sudden Impact but stimulants such as the liquid version of that product, GoGo Juice and other foliage feeds will continue to keep things moving. Regular watering should ensure that the nutrients applied to the surface in earlier weeks will find their way to the roots. That is much more likely to happen if the soil is loose and friable. Our garden fork, and hand forks have been getting a workout to achieve this goal. Heavy clay soils compact with rain and the surface becomes impenetrable.

Those foliage feeds, particularly the seaweed based ones, should help to minimise fungal problems. Powdery mildew likes warm days and cool nights. It will appear as a greyish discolouring of the leaves, often starting on the underside. Blackspot may occur too but good nutrition and avoiding evening watering should help to avoid the problem. Following a regular spraying regime of Ecocarb, EcoOil and E-Seaweed will give protection. The latter is also sold in large containers as Acadian. It is 100% concentrated seaweed and comes from Canada. The lot that we have has lasted for years and has a variety of uses such as vegetables and container plants. It must continue to be kept in the airtight container otherwise it goes lumpy.

By now you may well have placed your orders for new roses. There is still time but I feel that nurseries tend to put up the sold out signs earlier than used to be the case.

A viewing of the roses at the Royal Easter Show may give you ideas for new cultivars. Seeing the actual blooms gives us a much better idea than looking at photos. Many of the tried and true roses are seen on the showbench. However, exhibitors can sometimes produce a new or rarely seen cultivar. When we first showed Seduction in the early 1990s it was much admired and has continued to be ever since. Not only is it attractive but it is hardy too. This season it has been the best of our roses. Apricot Nectar and Altissimo have stood out with Seduction.

Certainly preparations should be well under way for the arrival of new plants in the winter. Whilst I appreciate that nursery costs are considerable I feel that the days are gone when anyone can go in and buy roses and other plants of their choice and still have spare change. The new plantings should be given every chance. Prepare a nice big hole with friable soil. As always, remove existing soil if making a replacement. It is likely to be lacking in nutrients and could harbour diseases. A good sprinkling of Seamungus is a recipe for a good start.



To close I would like to pay tribute to Elwin Notley who passed away on the day before Camden Show. To us, he WAS Mr Horticulture. He was actively involved with the Dahlia Society, the RHS, the RAS, Blacktown Show Society and the Rose Society. In the days when Dahlia shows were BIG he and Bruce Hannel were outstanding judges. Above all, he was a mentor and a wonderful man who did so much for so many people.



Best wishes to all rosarians, Graham

Healthy Soil

Whether you are growing flowers, herbs, vegetables, a lawn, or a shrub border, healthy soil is an absolute must. Your plants will be less prone to pest and disease issues, they'll grow better, and they'll look better. With a bit of know-how, some work, and some patience, you can have healthy soil, no matter what kind of soil you start with.

Healthy Soil Characteristics

If good soil could be achieved merely by buying a bag of fertiliser from the garden centre, most Americans would be boasting perfect soil. While fertility is obviously an aspect of good garden soil, there is so much more involved. Good soil has



Good texture: You often hear gardeners talk about their soil's "crumb." This refers to the texture of the soil. Good soil is crumbly, like cookie crumbs scattered over the top of an ice cream sundae.



Lots of organic matter: Organic matter is just dead plant and animal tissue, which decomposes and enriches your soil as humus. Humus helps improve your soil's texture by binding some of the smaller particles together, which increases your soil's aeration. It also improves your soil's ability to both absorb and drain moisture. Finally, organic matter helps provide nutrients to your plants. Microorganisms help break down the organic matter into its basic elements, which enables plants to absorb it and use it.



Healthy pH: Soil pH is the measurement of the acidity of your soil. This affects the minerals contained in garden soil and their availability to your plants. In general, the closer to neutral your soil is, the better your plants will be able to take up these minerals. Of course, some plants prefer a more [acidic soil](#), but for most flowers, herbs, and vegetables, a more [neutral pH](#) is optimal.

There are three main types of soil:

1. **Clay soil:** Clay has tiny particles that stick together, forming large clumps. While clay soil tends to be of higher fertility than other soil types, it is not optimal to garden in because its texture makes it very difficult for plant roots to work their way into it. Improving clay soil takes some work, but it will make life much easier for your plants.
2. **Sandy soil:** Sandy soil is definitely easier to work than clay soil--but it has the opposite problems: it often drains too quickly and is less able to retain nutrients.
3. **Loam:** This is an ideal garden soil. Crumbly, full of organic matter, retains moisture yet still drains well. This is what we're working toward; this is "good" garden soil.



Tips for Improving

There are several things you can do to improve your soil. Luckily, they are actually all fairly easy to do.

Test your soil: The first thing to do is learn all you can about your soil. You may want to try a couple of DIY soil tests to learn more about the level of life in your soil and what its texture is like.

Add organic matter: Adding organic matter is hands-down, without a doubt, the number one way to improve your soil. Whether your soil is clay, sand, low in nutrients, compacted, has poor drainage; organic matter will fix it.

So what should you be adding to your soil?

Compost is a must. It will improve your soil immediately and introduce microorganisms that will continue improving your soil by further breaking down organic matter. Add as much as you possibly can; it really is nearly impossible to overdo it with compost. Add some in spring before planting. Side-dress your plants with it throughout the growing season, and add more in autumn when the garden slows down. You will see an improvement in no time.

In addition to compost, there are several other things you can add to your soil to increase the amount of organic matter (and therefore overall fertility.) Grass clippings, shredded autumn leave, aged manure or coffee grounds, ground up egg shells will help your garden soil increase in fertility, water retention, and improved texture.

Adjust your soil's pH: Once you have your soil tested, you'll know whether you have a pH imbalance. If your soil is acidic, there are several things you can do to reduce acidity. The addition of plenty of organic matter will help this.

Don't compact the soil: One reason so many gardeners like raised beds is because it eliminates one of the main causes of soil compaction: people stepping in the garden beds! Continually stepping or pulling wheelbarrows over a garden bed compacts the soil, making it more difficult for the plant roots to grow. Avoid stepping on garden beds as much as possible.

Disrupt soil as little as possible: No-dig or no-till gardening is becoming more popular, partially because it reduces the amount of work the gardener has to do, but also because we understand more about the soil food web. The more we disrupt the soil, the more we disrupt the ecosystem in our soil. That ecosystem is what makes healthy, crumbly, nutrient-rich soil possible. Till and dig as little as possible. A

Add organic matter to the top inch or two of soil, or just lay it right on top of your garden and let the earthworms work it in for you.

With these tips, you will see a vast improvement in the quality of your soil, and, therefore, in the health and beauty of your plants. It will take a little time, but your patience will be well rewarded.

Camden Show



Above: Joyce Abounding - Ian and Maureen Thackeray

Below: Floral Art Two Colours - Maureen Thackeray



Above: Moonstone - Judith Carl

Below: Floral Art - Different Greens - Maureen Thackeray





Macarthur Diary Meeting Dates

1st April - General Meeting

6th May - General Meeting

3rd June - AGM followed by the general meeting and Cut Above Tools presentation

30 June - annual membership fees due

1st July - General Meeting

5th August - General Meeting

2nd September - General Meeting

7th October - General Meeting

21-22 October - National Rose Show in Perth WA

Early October or November Our Spring Rose Show

4th November - General Meeting

2nd December - Christmas Party

5th Ian Thackeray
7th Graham Wright
17th Judith Carll



We meet at the CWA Camden Hall on the first Saturday of each month other than January at 2:00pm. The venue can be accessed through the Coles Camden carpark either as a pedestrian or with a vehicle.

Coles Camden is at 19 Murray Street, Camden. Alternatively, the carpark of the CWA can be accessed from the first roundabout on Cawdor Road opposite the Camden Bowling and Sports Club.

We are open from 1:30pm to give you time to arrange your roses for the show bench prior to the meeting. Oasis can be purchased at the show bench preparation area for \$1 per block. There is also a Buy, Sell and Swap table for our home grown produce and other products we may want to share. Our library of rose books are available at our meetings.

Come along enjoy great conversation, beautiful roses and meet new friends. All are welcome. For further information telephone: 0410 444 562

