

Macarthur Rose Newsletter

Vol 30, No: 10, June 2024



AGM Deferment

Due to unforeseen circumstances our AGM has been deferred. It will now be held before our general meeting on Saturday 3 August 2024.

Thank you to all of you who have already nominated for positions for the next year. Your willingness to participate and support the functioning of the Macarthur Regional Rose Society is greatly appreciated.

While the deferment is unfortunate given the preparatory work that our hardworking secretary June Hickey has already undertaken, it also gives many more of the Macarthur members the opportunity to look over the available positions and choose an interesting and rewarding role to nominate. Most of the roles are not onerous and just require you to keep a watching brief and maybe make a few phone calls or to organise a prize etc. Your support is always greatly appreciated.

Neutrog

The online ordering system is available and open until early September.

Now is the time to be thinking about what fertilisers and supplements you will need for your gardens and pots over the spring and summer seasons. Remember, in the spring our roses need lots of feeding and supporting to keep up that flushing of blooms. Over the summer they need help to endure the heat, humidity and damp if the rains persist for too long.

Our preferential ordering and pricing system with Neutrog is one of the most important benefits of your membership. Take full advantage of this wonderful bonus attached to your membership.

Dear Rose Friends

This month we were due to hold our AGM, but due to unforeseen circumstances it has had to be deferred. I apologise for the inconvenience and thank all the office holders who have agreed to stay on in their roles until the AGM in August.

This month our cultural notes are diverse. Graham Wright has once again given us his learned advice on what to do in the garden in the coming month. Gary Wootton, one of our newer, but very experienced rosarians, has closely reviewed a very good article from the American Rose Journal on how to improve soil quality. This follows on from the presentation that we had at our last meeting on how to build better soil. Autumn and winter are the best times for major soil improvements. A follow up article will be in our July newsletter.

Our pruning duties are rapidly approaching and to get the best results possible we need to make sure our secateurs are clean, sharp and work properly and easily. Page 4 has a guide on how to sharpen your secateurs to get the best results.

Sometimes when our roses are completely overgrown, it can be difficult to work out where and how to go about pruning them back neatly and effectively. Page 5 has pictorial reminders on how to go about pruning your rose bushes such as where to prune, what to prune and getting the best shape for the next season.

In August, the National Rose Society of Australia, which includes NSW Rose Society representation, is holding an educational webinar for all Australian Rose Society members. Don't miss this opportunity! Registration is required before the Zoom meeting starts. Use the link on Page 5 or to to the Rose Society of NSW website to register. The link is on the front page of the website under the 'latest news' section. You have also previously received an email with a live link for registration. If you need help to register, please contact me for assistance.



Melbourne Town (Hybrid Tea)

Rosalie Vine will be presenting at our meeting on Saturday 1 June on Gardening in Small Spaces. Rosalie has successfully moved from a very large rose garden to a much smaller space. Rosalie still manages to grow the best quality roses in her smaller space. She will be sharing how to perform this seemingly magical transition. It will also be time for Rosalie to present our Show Bench trophy. Good luck to all of you who participated so generously over the latest growing season to make our meetings look like meetings of a Rose Society. I trust you all learnt something about rose growing through your participation on the show bench.

For all of you who have paid your FY2025 membership fees, you will be included in the draw to win your fees back. Good Luck to all the early payers including our newer members.

I am unable to attend our June meeting due to very unfortunate circumstances, but look forward to catching up with you all at our July pruning session. Yours in roses,

Judith

June Cultural Notes

The weather determines the activities in the garden. In our district most winters are the same. Temperatures will drop to around zero and rise to the low 20s. Such a range is quite easy for roses to accommodate and for that matter most of the plants in our gardens. In earlier times I remember the playing fields at Camden being as white as snow with the frost but that is now very rare. This is all a contrast to summer when canes can be damaged with sunburn and the foliage and blooms are burnt.

In terms of moisture requirements the cooler months can be a trap. We have a shower or two, the soil looks dark and we assume that we do not have to water. We don't want our garden to be soggy but it is still important that water is moving through from the top layers to the roots which are always busy. Pots are a

different story to the garden bed and certainly will dry out almost as quickly as later in the year.



Sexy Rexy (Floribunda)

For largely commercial reasons the planting season has extended from what seems to be May to August. Nurseries like to get their orders early and then have a long distribution calendar. During the early stages it is the bare-rooted versions which are available. They are tightly wrapped in plastic bags with damp sawdust or shredded paper keeping the roots hydrated. Most people now place the new plants in a bucket of water after removing them from the wrapping. I usually add a little seaweed to the water and leave them to soak for a day or so.

There are no great mysteries in planting a rose bush. Good soil preparation should give the rose the start to its new life. Remember that it may be in that same spot for some time. We have four roses which have been in the same position for 43 years and continue to flourish. There are others which are only ten years old which have been threatened with the spade.

The bud union of the new rose should be placed just above the natural soil level. This is after having sat the rose on top of a fist full of soil. Firm down well with some surrounding soil, add a little Seamungus, water and then complete the filling. If the plant sits too high in the hole the chances are that as it matures it will swing around in the wind.

It is likely that roses purchased a little later in the season will come in pots. Sometimes it may be that such plants had their origins in the bare-rooted form and, not having sold as quickly as anticipated, they are moved to a pot. In most cases they are fine but have a good look at the plant. Sometimes it may be possible to leave the potting mix attached to the roots but otherwise flush it off and treat like you would with a bare-rooted rose.

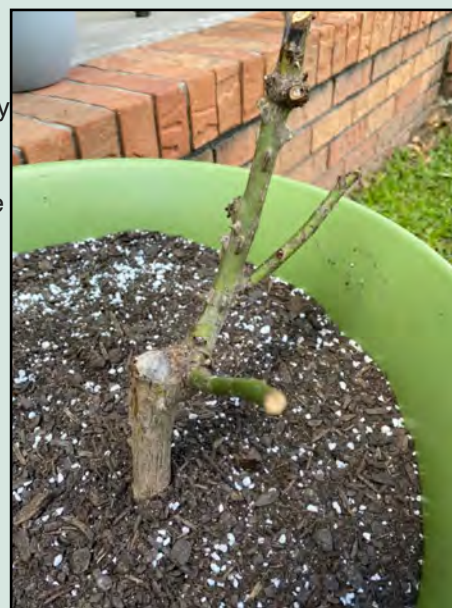
The growth habits of roses vary considerably so take that into account when planting. I am certainly planting closer these days. It is more economical and has not posed any difficulties with care.

There is no point in pruning this early but preparations can be made. Tools need to be clean and sharp. This makes the task much easier and helps to avoid any health issues with the plants. I anticipate that we will be pruning in some private gardens, and there is a job for everyone on such occasions. Traditionally, pruning days have been an enjoyable social day where some people are busy with the secateurs and others are "picker-uppers". Gloves are important with whatever task you choose.

As mentioned elsewhere this month we have our AGM. We have been extremely fortunate to have such an enthusiastic group looking after the administration of our Regional this past year. By sharing the load we are not burning out those people and at the same time we are drawing on the experience and ideas of new committee members. We must look ahead to two years time when the Australian Rose Championships will be held in Camden. Many hands will make light work.

Best wishes to all rosarians,

Graham Wright

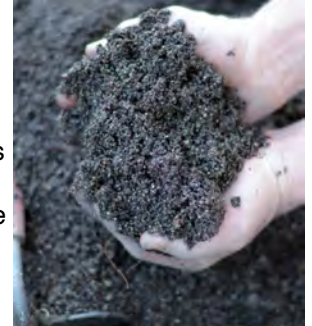


The Soil Beneath our Roses- Soil Organic Matter

Reprinted, with amendments to Australian conditions, from the American Rose Society Journal May 2024

IN THE LAST MEETING, we reviewed soil texture and its importance in determining soil quality. We also noted that soils containing too much sand or too much clay can benefit greatly by the addition of organic matter. Here we will discuss some of the types of organic matter currently available and how and why amending soil with organic matter can greatly improve many soil properties.

Soil organic matter consists of all the living and dead plant and animal materials, including microorganisms, found in the soil. They can occur naturally in the soil or be added to the soil by gardeners. The benefits of organic matter are numerous. First, it can contribute appreciably to high soil oxygen content, which greatly improves root growth. It also promotes water retention, while reducing water logging. Organic matter improves soil root penetrability as well as help obtain a crumbly structure, which helps soil resist compaction. It also aids the soil in maintaining a long-lasting supply of slow-release nutrients.



Let's begin with the establishing a new rose garden on bare ground, which may or may not have been previously tilled. The first step is to test your soil for texture, nutrient content, pH. When your soil test result arrives (if you have sent the soil away to be tested), look first at the pH level. If your soil is too clayey or too sandy, then you will benefit from adding organic material to your soil before establishing your garden.



Falling in Love (Hybrid Tea)

Currently, you have many options for increasing organic matter and improving soil texture. If you have a year or two before planting your roses, you may first want to plant what is called a "cover crop" or "Green Manure". Legumes, such as mustard plant and clover, are often used for this purpose. At the end of the growing season, till the crop into the soil. This will increase its organic matter and, in the case of legumes, will also add nitrogen. If the soil is very sandy or clayey, you may also want to till in one of several organic materials. The most common and useful of these is good old-fashioned garden compost. If you are a gardener, you probably already have a compost pile and, hopefully, are managing it properly. A quick Google search will help you find composting organizations near you that are eager to help you learn about compost and composting. Try to stick with leaves, grass clippings, and garden detritus. Also, try to avoid putting mature weeds with attached seeds into your compost pile if possible.

Manures are another excellent source of organic matter. There are many types: chicken, cow, livestock, etc. These have the added benefit of providing some nutrients to the soil – primarily nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and possibly some micronutrients. Neutrog supplies all of the above-mentioned products. Although the nutrient content of manure is low when compared to fertilizer, these nutrients tend to release slowly in the soil, so they stay around for a long time. Manures that have been bagged are often composted or dehydrated. It is suggested that organic mulching is a good way of getting organic matter down into the top surface of your garden soil. Added to the soil surface around your plants, this mulch will gradually break down and slowly work its way into the soil. It also has many other benefits such as resisting the establishment of weeds, preventing evaporation of water from the soil surface, keeping the soil surface cool on hot days and warm on cold days and impeding the establishment of soil-born insects.

Lots of materials can serve as mulch, such as grass clippings, rotted sawdust, tree leaves, (note that pine needles, and wood or arborist chips can be used but they are also problematic for rose health). All these mulches break down and must be replenished every few years.

In summary if you are establishing a new rose garden on bare ground, you have several options for improving its organic matter content including cover cropping and tilling-in various types of organic materials. For those of us with established rose gardens, mulching provides an avenue for adding organic matter to the soil. It has added benefits of weed prevention, soil temperature modification, water retention and insect control.



With thanks to Gary Wootton for reviewing this article and providing an Australian focus to the information.

Secateur Maintenance

Cleaning and Sharpening

Confucius was on to something when he said “the mechanic who would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools”. A sharp tool is efficient and safe to use.

The fact that it's efficient is obvious – sharp tools cut more cleanly, take less time, and cause less damage to plant tissue – but the idea that sharpness equals safety can seem counterintuitive. Wouldn't a razor-sharp grafting knife be more likely to slice off a gardener's finger than a blunt knife?

Absolutely not! A sharp tool requires less force to make a cut, offering greater control and reducing the chances of slipping or over-cutting. Just as a chef sharpens their knife before they start preparing for a lunch service, a gardener should at least sharpen important tools before every gardening session. If you find yourself hacking and sawing away at the rose wood instead of cleanly snipping and slicing, stop what you're doing, grab a sharpener and renew that tool's cutting blade.

Step 1 - Clean your secateurs before you sharpen. Use some steel wool and warm water and gently clean off the glued on sap and dirt. Wipe the blades dry with some paper towels.



Image above: A Felco stone for blade sharpening. The 903 indicates the part number. You can buy these for less than \$10 from places such as Ace Ohlsson, Enfield Produce and even the big green shed. If they don't have them in stock, all stockists will order them in for you. They are easy to use, last many years and blade sharpening sessions. They can be used to sharpen all types of secateurs not just Felco's and can be cleaned with a weak detergent solution.

...Cont

Step 2 - Turn your secateurs upside down and position your fingers loosely over the spring (see right) This will keep your hands safe while you sharpen the blade and prevent you dropping them unexpectedly. Especially if your grip is not as strong as it used to be.



Step 3 - Holding your sharpener at roughly a 23° degree angle, move it in small circles up and down along the bevel edge of the blade. Try to keep a smooth motion and maintain the angle to ensure an even and sharp blade edge. It takes practice but persist. It's worth it!



Step 4 - Turn the sharpener onto its thin edge (see below) and at a 60° angle applying light pressure, slide it along the blade from the bottom to the blade tip. Slide it in a smooth continuous motion to the tip, smoothing the edge of the blade and completing the sharp edge.



Step 5 - Now turn the secateurs over (image below) and at a slight 5° degree angle, simply work the sharpener in a smooth, continuous motion down the back of the blade to remove any loose pieces from the back of the bevel.



Step 6 - Finish off with a final wipe over with a clean cloth. Now apply a generous amount of oil along the blade and around all the moving parts. Wipe the excess oil off and you are now ready to snip, slice and prune safely for you and your roses. Do this every couple of weeks to keep your secateurs sharp, safe and usable.

rose Information

Free Webinar



NATIONAL ROSE SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC.

Invites Rose Society financial members to a Zoom webinar.

When: Sunday August 18, 2024
Time for the 1 hour webinar
3.30pm EST;
3:00pm Adelaide;
1.30pm WST

Topic: Dr Uwe Stroehrer - Keeping Diseases in Check

Register in advance for this webinar:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/>

The webinar will be recorded and can be shared with members after the event.

Those who wish to attend will need to register their attendance in order to receive the link that will let them 'in'.

This will also allow you to send questions during Uwe's talk. Members are also welcome to send questions in advance.

The National Rose Society of Australia is holding a free webinar for all financial members of the Rose Society. This is just one of its initiatives to ensure you get specialised information about rose growing and great value from your membership.

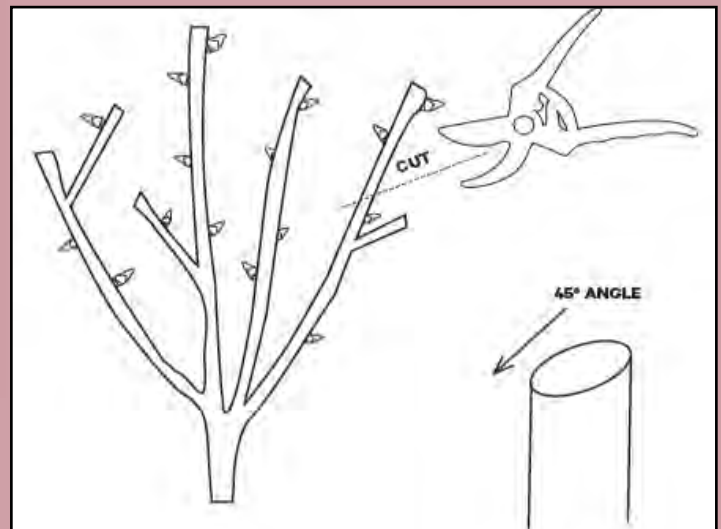
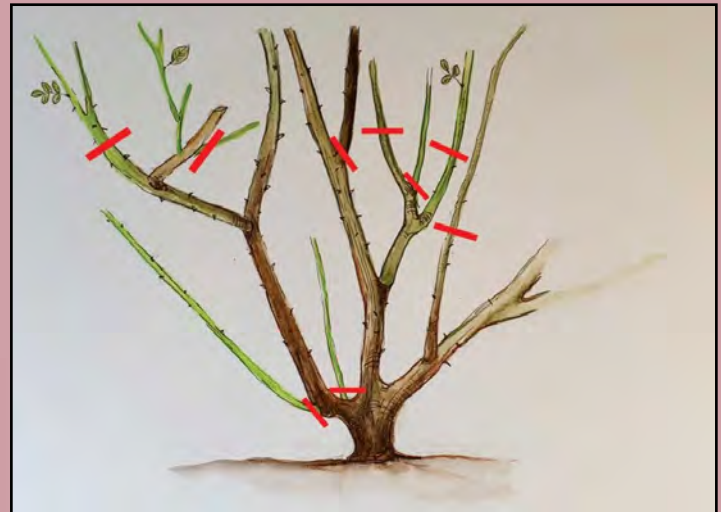
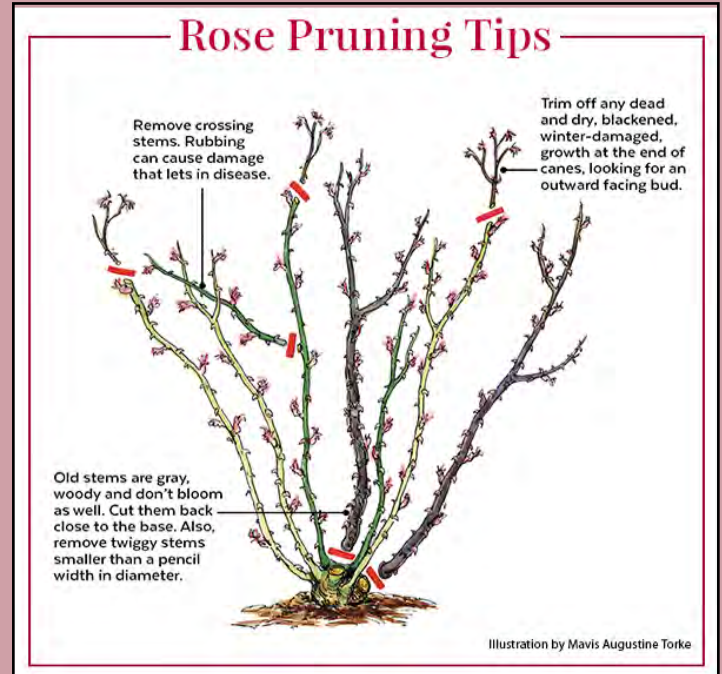
All Macarthur Regional Rose Society members are eligible to log in and participate in the webinar. Dr Uwe Stroehrer is the chief scientist at Neutrog and leads the team behind the development of Popul8 and other ground breaking and environmentally sound products. Register from the email that you were sent recently, or click on the hyperlink in the above notice, or visit the NSW Rose website to register there.



Image above: Australian Beauty is a relatively new floribunda rose from multi-award-winning rose breeder Bruce Brundrett. Its delicate tinted buds open to reveal a flat, multi-layered rosette of petals in shades ranging from the lightest pink to pale peach tones. This upright plant boasts mid-green foliage, is healthy, and flowers freely. Its soft tones make it an ideal choice for a cut flower rose, perfect for creating bountiful arrangements. It has a light fragrance and grows to approximately 120cm in height and 100cm in width.

Rose Pruning

Our usual monthly general meeting in July is always earmarked for our pruning session. Once again, Mrs Irene Vitocco has made her wonderful garden available for us to practice and learn the arts of pruning roses.



Make all cuts at a 45 degree angle to allow the moisture to run off the cut stem.

