

SPRING ROSE NOTES

For the past week, while eating my breakfast, I am delighted to observe a family of Blue Wrens feeding on aphids and insects on the new, fresh rose foliage. This fresh foliage is very inviting for aphids and other insects. I prefer not to spray the aphids as a jet of hose water or a wipe with my fingers dislodges any excess aphids. Praying Mantis and Ladybirds are also natural predators of aphids as too are many small birds. This is the reason I do not use any insecticide spray.

Keeping an adequate water supply to roses during drought can be a challenge. I like to estimate a rose bush requires a bucket of water per week. It seems more consistent to apply half a bucket full of water twice a week.

October is feeding time for rose bushes. Approx. 1 cup full per established rose bush of No. 17, scattered evenly around the root area then water in.

Replace the mulch around the root area and top-up mulch if required. With scarcity of water, mulching bushes will be vital. Ensure the soil around the rose root area is kept damp, as too thick an application of mulch can leave a plant devoid of water.

Any odd leaf showing a black spot, I spray immediately using the Eco Fungicide spray available in a hand-held trigger pack. Prompt attention to one or two leaves saves other leaves becoming infected. Only spray the leaf with a black spot.

I hope the Spring flush of roses is rewarding for you.

Barbara Horn.