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Roses Feeding the Soul

The setting sun on a
hill
sprinkled with roses,
Paints a relief of
intricate poses.
It is a haven of beauty
in which to feed
the soul.
It is a richness worth
much more than
precious gold.
--Russell A. Baum

D the G - - December, 2015

The time of year has arrived to pick up your compass and sight the rising and setting sun on December 21st, which is the Winter Solstice. The idea behind sighting the sun, as it relates to the garden, is to not install plants that need sun in locations where they will be shaded in the Winter. Not paying attention to the general environment is one of the common errors made by many weekly gardening services, you know the 'Mow, Blow and Go' services. Other commonly made mistakes are: not paying attention to the direction of the winds, not ordering a soils test, choosing the wrong plants, and choosing the right plants and installing them incorrectly. I'm a licensed Landscape Contractor in California. About 25% of my business consists of Garden Evaluations and Consultations. It is not pleasant to tell homeowners that their sad looking Japanese Maple will continue to fail in it's exposed location in Calabasas. Worse still are situations when I tell the homeowners that the expensive tree with the ill mannered roots was planted next the main water line to their home. Their choices are, 1. try and move the tree, 2. write the big check and have the water main line moved. Success in the garden with any type of planting, especially roses, encourages the expansion of interest and involvement in the garden.

The summer of 2015 was long, hot, and punctuated with rain storms. The possibility exists that the winter of 2016 could be long and wet. Prepare now!!! Clean your drains and rain gutters, check your roofs, and install rain barrels. Make sure that your potted plants have drainage. Do not allow water to collect in any container except rain barrels.

The rose garden will need the usual considerations for this time of year. Which roses will be replaced and which roses will be added. Two David Austin Roses to consider are: 1. The Poets Wife. This rose with corral pink flowers grows 10-15 feet, has a citrus scent, and has a good repeat bloom. 2. Olivia Rose Austin. This rose has a pink flower with a fruity scent. An interesting point to this rose is that it is in David Austin's 'disease free line.'

I prune my clients' and my roses when they go out of flower. My goal is to have roses available on a year round basis. Last year my Yves St. Lauren was coming into flower in mid-December. There were at least 50 buds and blooms on the bush. It made a great display. Because of the temperatures, it stayed in flower well into January. The rule book that I tossed years ago said that roses should be pruned back by some arbitrary date. Remember that many exhibitors do a summer prune 45 days before the fall rose shows. The 4 types of pruning during the year are: 1. fall winter prune, 2. finger prune, 3. summer prune, and 4. shovel prune and plant another bush. My base line for selecting roses is selecting roses that do well where they are planted, are disease resistant, and that repeat quickly. After that base line, I select roses with good exhibition form and fragrance. Recommendations for pruning will be listed in the next D the G.

Many thanks to Janet Sklar for sharing the these two websites that offer free information for your garden. The first is a Soil Test Map that supplies an analysis of the 'native soil' for your area: <http://casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/gmap/>. The second is for Grey Water: <http://ceriverside.ucanr.edu/files/183496.pdf>.

The San Fernando Valley Rose Society has a Facebook page. One goal of this page is to further open a window into the world of roses. The SFVRS Facebook page will also have information relating to meetings, and other events in the world of roses. Members of the SFVRS, guests, and friends are welcome to contribute posts of items relating to the world of roses. Examples of what are welcome posts are: photos of roses and rose gardens, photos of rose shows, uses of roses, poems and stories about the rose, and rose recipes. Other examples of welcome posts are: posts asking questions and receiving information regarding roses (about all aspects of the rose), sharing other posts regarding roses, roses in art, and research relating to the rose. There are more ideas out there than I'm able to conceive of. [You must log into your Facebook account to access this page. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1505410736452674/>]

Water has been a serious reality for us in the Los Angeles area. I take the necessity to conserve and to use water wisely very seriously. It's always a good idea to consider non-standard sources and ways of generating water. This last summer I suggested using the water produced by an air conditioner's condensation line. The air conditioner at my home produced about 6 to 10 gallons per day. Also after careful research, I have determined that 'Rain Dances' are 100 percent effective in producing rain. The procedure is to begin dancing and then to keep dancing until it rains. This is the simplest way of bringing rain and maintaining good health.

Happy Gardening,
D the G
[Dave's Greenscapes](#)

