

D the G -- February 2013

Are you getting ready for spring planting or have you already begun? It's a trick question. If you live in New York, spring will begin when the snow melts in April or May. If you live in Los Angeles, spring begins at the end of the hot season in October or November. I planted and recommended planting pansys, snapdragons, lettuces, and roses since the end of the hot season. The smart money has been enjoying cool season flowers and cool season vegetables and herbs for 3 ½ months.

The climate in Los Angeles is predictably unpredictable. Our rainfall is somewhere between 3 ½ inches and 39 inches. I do recommend looking at the [Rainfall Chart](#) provided by the L.A. Times that chronicles the rainfall for the past 130 years for L.A. What is a bit different this year is the extended cold and frosts of the past 6 weeks.

Frost can wreak havoc with plants susceptible to the cold weather. I have taken to decorating my frost-sensitive plants with holiday lights for warmth. It has worked well in preventing damage during these cold nights and days. The type that I use are old school lights. The plants do not seem to mind if the lights are colored or clear. Do not use LED type lights as they produce about zero heat. I have been using mini lights in a mesh light configuration; the set is 4' x 6'. There is a fairly large collection of bromeliads and tsillandias in my garden. Not one has been damaged or lost since the addition of the lights. The lights look kind of neat glowing from across the back garden. I'm planning on leaving a string of lights for the summer months.



I'm going to strongly recommend that the article by Jim Delahanty in the February issue of *ARS and You* be read and passed along. Jim is a powerful and intelligent man in the guise of a quiet gentleman. I have learned several things from Jim. Firstly, he was the one responsible for me looking at Polyantha Roses. I never really focused on Polyanthas until Jim's presentation at the SFVRS several years ago. Since that time I realized what a wonderful and productive type of rose are Polyanthas. Jim Delahanty's article "Five Signs of a Rose Society in Disarray" that is in this month's *ARS and You* was brought to my attention by Janet Sklar. Janet is another person who understands the best interests of rose societies and who also can take the long view.

Another facet of why I love roses is that they are easy to transplant. My garden has become tight on space. It is a situation of one rose in and one rose out, except for the ones growing in containers. This year I dug up four roses and gave them to friends and to my neighbor. Twilight Zone (a Tom Carruth hybrid), Sugar Moon (a Christian Bettard hybrid) are in. I am looking at several others to fill the empty spaces.

Have your roses started to bud out? If so, it is time for the second pruning of the year -- finger pruning. I have done a soils test so the minerals that my roses require have been applied. Also applied is a thick layer of mulch. Your roses and smaller water bill will thank you during the hot season. The first feeding of this year will probably be in the first two weeks of March, depending on the temperatures.

Anyone with a citrus tree in their garden? Be aware that the Citrus Psyllid insect has been found in Simi Valley. There is no known insect combatant. The only available material to combat the psyllid is a mild chemical spray or systemic. A good friend of mine works at Sunkist. Everyone with citrus is concerned.



Keep feeding seasonal flowers, herbs and lawns.

Happy gardening,

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[Dave's Greenscapes](#)