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D the G - - February, 2017

Hello Fellow Gardeners,

Rains have graced the Los Angeles area this year. What does that mean? Rains are helping to replenish the ground water. Salts from city water are being leached further down into the soil. The rains have leached a bit of nitrogen from the atmosphere. Less salts and more nitrogen will translate into greener hills and gardens that are more productive. The rains will also promote other things, among them: mosquitos, fleas, ticks, other insects, mice, rats, and their predators like snakes and predatory birds. Rains promote green growth that will translate into a greater fire danger towards the end of summer. Rains also cleanse the streets and roads of L.A. What is cleansed is washed into the ocean, which means beach closures due to debris and harmful bacteria. All-in-all, I love the rain. Recording rainfall amounts began in L.A. in 1887. The **rainfall in L.A.** is somewhere between 3 ½ to 39 inches per year. Fickle? Yes!

One important aspect to a rainy season that can affect you is the massive amounts of pollen that will be produced. Sensitive persons should be aware that 2017 is going to be one hum-dinger of a Hay Fever year.

Bare root season is coming to an end. Containerized roses will be available very soon. There are about 25,000 roses in the world. My suggestion is to choose roses that do well where they are being planted, that are disease resistant, and that repeat bloom quickly. If your choices are also exhibition form and fragrant - so much the better.

Now that your roses have been pruned, canes sealed, dormant sprays applied, and a layer of mulch replenished; time to get ready to nourish those roses. Foods and minerals: Minerals are not foods. Minerals such as iron and magnesium, etc., are essential for the growth and health of roses and do not generally promote green growth. Nitrogen is also essential for the health of roses and does promote green growth. My preference is to apply minerals at the end of the hot season or after the roses have been pruned.

There are two questions regarding feeding. When should be roses be fed for the first time of the year and what are the temperatures going to be over the next few weeks? I've come to understand that the weather in the L.A. area is fickle. With rainfall between 3 1/2 and 39 inches; temperatures follow suit. If it's a warmer year feed sooner. If it's a cooler year feed later. Generally, feeding begins at the end of February or the beginning of March. Push roses in the direction that they are going. When roses are sprouting leaves, feed them.

What type of foods to use; the bottom line is to use the foods that you prefer. Always follow package directions! My preference is to use organic foods. All of the good organic foods include beneficial bacteria. Nourish the plants and soil and let the soil nourish the plants. None of the chemical foods include beneficial bacteria. A discussion of the different types of foods will be in a future segment of D the G.



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

I do have a strong preference and use organic products exclusively at my home and in my business. I submit a list of products, in writing, to the homeowner for approval, in advance. I have six years of experience with being an insurance agent for the Farmers Group. Those six years gave me an understanding of liability exposure. Chemical sprays do not respect property lines. Case-in-point, a weekly gardener did not understand that chemical sprays would not be a welcomed addition to the neighbor's vegetable garden or jungle gym and sand box. As a result, a law suit has been filed. The request is to replace: the jungle gym, sand box, vegetable garden, soils, clean the walls of the house, detoxify the trees, etc. There is also a demand for damages. It was unfortunate that the children were playing in the yard during the spraying of the chemicals which crossed the property line and landed on the children. Since the weekly gardener was not insured; the lawsuit was filed naming the homeowner. Unfortunate for all. Lesson learned.

Happy Gardening,
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