

Rose Care for July / August

I only have 150 roses counting all the miniatures. Yet, I am always wondering what to do and what not to do to keep them blooming at all times since I am such a hog when it comes to rose blooms. Have you ever wondered about that too?

As we all know, the weather, the soil, watering and feeding regimen, and some major TLC such as dead heading, cutting unwanted long, skinny growth coming from nowhere, cleaning around the roots, should be part of their daily care.

I am a great believer that the more you address their needs and perhaps even talking to them are the key to getting tremendous blooms. Whenever friends visit, invariably I am accused of giving them steroids, as in how can these blooms be so gigantic and so many? Of course, I do no such things, not guilty.

Recently, I hired an irrigation repair expert highly recommended by one of our members. To my delight and satisfaction, not only did my water bill go down by 8% so far, but the plants themselves all look very happy. So, this could be one reason.

Another is that I talk to my plants and believe it or not, they do respond. I have had the same experience with orchids that for years, I've nurtured, watered and fed but without any success. I finally explained my dilemma to the question man from the American Orchid Society who suggested tossing the plant. I went back and told my *Zygopetalum* about this. I threatened to trash her unless I see a bloom. Believe it or not, that orchid bloomed so nicely and now it continues to live in my garden. The same thing happened to a cattleya and instead of blooming once, which is the normal cycle in March, it bloomed again in June.

So, there you have it. One may think this is crazy particularly if you are heard talking to your plants. But I guarantee you, it works. I have all the usual hybrid tea, floribunda and grandiflora. The routine care and compost tea feeding done in April and July certainly satisfies the challenge of the rose.

By Lydia Truce, Consulting Rosarian

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