

## Rose Care for November/December

Spring, summer, fall and voila winter!!!! Fortunately or unfortunately, here in our lovely state, specifically Marin county, our winter is not snow, or ice but rather tons of rain. Normally, the rain starts in November and ends in March. So, compared to the rest of the country, our winter is mellow.

Simply put, winterizing our garden is not a complicated or mysterious task as long as you keep in mind that our plants do need some period of rest or dormancy. It is more an activity of wrapping up the cycle of plant growth as we approach fall. Doing so equips them to get the energy to bloom come spring.

The basic rule is good sanitation. So clean, clean, clean. Here are some general pointers to keep in mind:

- Get rid of all diseased and damaged plants. All obvious dead branches, canes, trunks can be put in the compost unless diseased, then they should go in the garbage.
- Remove all yellow and dead foliage and flowers.
- Pick up fallen fruits on the ground and those still hanging on the tree.
- Perennials that have stopped blooming should be cut back as low as possible.
- Divide crowded bulbs and tubers like daylilies, dahlia, and some iris.
- Annuals of course should be removed as soon as the bloom is gone and leaves have turned yellow.

As you know, fungus and bacteria can overwinter on leaves, under the bark, stems, roots and on old flowers and fruits, so deadheading is key.

For roses – same rules apply. Personally, I wait until the week between Christmas and New Years to strip ALL leaves from my roses. This way, you can get a good view of how you would want to prune them.

Finally, be sure to check your irrigation system. Change to a less frequent cycle or perhaps turn it off completely should we get some rain. Let's hope so!

By Lydia Truce, Consulting Rosarian

Edited for the website by Nanette Londeree, December 2019