

What to do in November in Your Rose Garden

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Our Kentucky weather was so goofy this year, it might be smart to prepare for the worst this winter, none of which would harm your roses if we have a mild winter.

Continue your spray program until at least one freeze has occurred.

Any time now, stop dead heading and let your blossoms form hips. You can assist this process by pulling off the petals of blossoms well past their prime. This also helps the overall appearance of the garden.

It is O.K. to feed the bushes maybe one more time. They need winter strength also. But NO Nitrogen, the first number in the three number sequence on all fertilize packaging. You want 0-10-10, 0-20-20, but no more than 2-15-15. Save the nitrogen until next spring.

After two HARD freezes (mid to low 20 degrees F), begin cleaning your beds:

Cut the bushes back by about half, which amounts to about knee high for big roses and about half that for little roses. I usually cut below where canes split into branches (like a candelabra effect.)

Strip the remaining canes of all leaves, hips, small (pencil size or less) canes, and any dead material.

Rake and remove all the unwanted material from the beds, including the summer mulch. Discard it all. I usually use a leaf blower to ensure that the beds are completely free of old leaves and any refuse.

Spray canes and dirt with any type of sulfur and/or dormant oil.

VERY CAREFULLY, use a garden hoe to rake some top soil around the bud on graft union. Avoid damaging the roses tiny feeder roots, which are very near the surface. Roses on fortuniana need extra, dirt, mulching, etc., because their bud union is usually several inches above ground, unlike other roses that will have it at or below ground level.

Take late December/early January off!