

Ryan's November, 2023 Garden Journal

November 1 - Rosarians keep asking me when I will start pruning my roses. I have always been non-committal. But now several of them say they have done a lot so far and that their yard waste cans are full. My yard debris pickup is next Tuesday so I will join the crowd and fill up my cans. So far, I have just been cutting long canes that are 6-7 feet down to about 5-6 feet with no attention to detail so the cans are filling up quickly.

November 4 - Time to add dolomitic lime. 4 handfuls equally spread around each bush and an extra handful for paths and the grass bordering each bed. I tried once to take extensive pH readings from around the garden and came up with so many readings between 5.3 and 6.3 that now I simply broadcast lime evenly throughout the beds. Even if the end result is some areas are above the ideal 6.5, that is still okay, and the pH reading will gradually lower anyway with 2024 fertilizing. Any roses that are not growing as well as I think they should warrant a single pH reading later and lime will be added accordingly.

November 10- I have finished the initial cut-back of all my roses. So let the high wind events come. My roses are ready. Last year, however, my tropical greenhouse was not ready and was ripped right out of the ground. So much for my guava and papayas.

November 16- Time for my new surgery-friendly pruning schedule to begin in earnest with a week or two of relatively dry weather coming up. All the winter pruning that I usually like to take my leisurely time with from November to early March is being accelerated so the pruning will be done, the garden mulched, and the anti-transpirant applied to all canes well before my January 11 knee surgery. This is a little risky since I do not know if there will be any severe cold snaps in the coming winter months which could cause severe winter damage, but this year my knee comes first.

November 25- Almost done with 2023 early pruning, but last night the temperature got down to 25 degrees making it the 4th time it has been below 30 degrees this year, which is my signal to mulch all the new 2023 roses in the garden. I still have some Soil Builders composted mulch in my trailer so I will use one 5-gallon bucket of this to cover the bud union. Later I will add another 5-gallon bucket of mini-nuggets with a collar around the rose to hold it in place. Good thing I already had the mulch and had cleaned the bushes out enough to simply dump the mulch right down the middle of each bush.

November 25, Part 2- But first I will mix up some of my favorite anti-transpirant Vapor Gard to the bud union and canes to hold moisture into the canes.

November 26- Emptied the trailer of the composted top/soil mulch from Soil Builders and picked up 4 cubic yards of mini-nuggets. Starting to put it down on the most winter tender varieties. November 27 - Yikes! Each night has gotten a bit colder, and this morning's low temperature was 22 and it might have been colder in the lower part of the garden as per my experiment 2 years ago. Fourth night in a row down into the mid-20's. Glad I got the anti-transpirant applied 3 days ago and the newer roses mulched. I will continue to put winter protection mini-nuggets once it warms up.

November 28- Another night in the low 20's. I have not seen so many days in a row this cold at night in November. So far this Autumn season the temperatures have been in the 20s eight times! This could be good as the gradual drop into the low 20s will have gotten the ground nice and cold so most of the mature roses have time to make their own cambium layer "anti-freeze" which will prevent the cell walls from freezing and bursting. As long as it does not warm up enough to get roses actively growing again, they should be fine. Of course, winter is just starting.

November 29- Final night of mid-20 degree weather with 24 degrees, perhaps lower, in the coldest part of my garden. I will use up the rest of the mulch in the trailer and put it around the most winter tender of the remaining mature roses and then get more mulch to use if it gets really cold again in December.