

Marching Right Along to Spring

March 2 - I have started doing my final cuts whenever the weather is not real sloppy. Slow and steady is my goal as I still am resting my knee as much as I can.

March 10 - A bit of a break in the weather. Got a few roses un-mounded and with the forecast showing no temperatures below 32, I plan on doing a bit more un-mounding each day from here on. There is no real growth going on anywhere in the garden, so I am waiting a bit to do the last 5% of my final cuts. Finally, some 50 degree weather is coming in a few days and I expect the growth to get going soon.

March 16- No more severe cold weather is forecast, so I'm un-mounding all the roses and spreading the mulch out to well beyond the drip-line of each bush.

March 18- Un-mounding is done and I'm spreading dolomitic lime over the entire rose garden to give it a few months to interact with the soil. It took 8 bags of lime to put it around all of my 250 roses. It is still too soon to put out any fertilizer as the ground is still too cold.

March 21- Started moving some of the potted roses out of the greenhouse to start acclimating the new growth to the elements and to give them more direct sunlight than they received inside the greenhouse. I'll move them back inside for the cold nights we are still having.

March 24 - Completed my 'Final Cuts' on all of the roses, but damaged canes will likely reveal themselves, so the pruners will be kept handy.

March 25- The roses by the street suffered last year despite the extra watering and extra care. Reflected heat from the street really stressed them. So I cut them significantly lower to promote bushier growth. Of course a few days below 90 degrees and an occasional rain shower would sure help the cause.

March 26- Potted roses are coming out of the greenhouse to begin the "hardening off" process so those new, tender shoots are acclimated to the outdoors. By keeping them outside 3-4 days at a time, they will get acclimated more quickly rather than "cold turkey". It's still too cold to leave them out at night, but, I've stopped the heat lamps and heaters in the green house to get them further used to the chilly nights later in April.

March 27- It's time to ready the irrigation system for action. I'm redesigning parts of my Dramm system, fixing the outside cracked faucets and fixing soaker hose leaks so the system is ready to go when the roses really start growing.

March 30- I'm pruning lower this year than last year. **Fragrant Plum, Dona Martin, Folklore, Touch of Class, Gift of Life, Let Freedom Ring, Soft Whisper, Ring of Fire, Snuffy, Randy Scott, and Octoberfest** are a few of the ones that got cut back more. With my ever increasing joint issues, this will make it a little easier to take of them.