

October 01 - With the recent rains, I can finally take some time off from watering duties to relax and do some cutting back of some of the monster bushes that have run amok. You might ask why I do not cut these roses back in the Spring so that they don't get so big. The answer is, "I DO," ! I cut 3-4 foot canes off of my 2 bushes of **Snuffy** back in June, but you would never know it now. Same **with Ring of Fire, Soft Whisper, Memorial Day, Sweet Mademoiselle, and Kristin Singer**. Even the usually modest grower **Halloween**, has shot up to 7 feet tall and 4 feet wide! It also looks like the new roses **Pilgrim Maid** and **Heavenly Scented are** on track to join the monster parade.

October 7 - Lots of rainy, cool weather coming up so I am adding **Decree** for downy mildew to my regular spray mix. Even though I have never really seen anything stop botrytis, I have it, so I am going to use it. And as always, right before a rain, I will use **Banner Maxx** because it does not wash off and **Daconil Ultrex** which has a weather stick component to it. Both will take care of any leaf spots that might come my way.

October 8 - Finally, the **Donna Grace** rose that I transplanted earlier this year is blooming and I had almost forgotten how nice those blooms can be. The blooms are large, well-formed, pure white with terrific fragrance. To be honest, if these blooms had not come along when they did, I likely would have dug it up and given it away. But for now, it will remain in the ground.

October 9 - Kind of disappointed that the **Frederic Mistral** I planted last year has not done better. By now it should have been huge with large, heavily-petaled fragrant blooms. Instead, it is rather spindly without any large blooms. Sometimes it takes a rose 3 years to establish, so it gets one more year. Not so for **Claire Elyse**. The occasional stunning reddish orange bloom does not absolve it from its borderline hardiness. Next year another plant of the outstanding hybrid tea **Kristin Singer** will be occupying that spot in the garden.

October 10 - Just saw the news and saw that a weak tornado hit the Portland/Vancouver area last night. Now the fact that my two heavy dragons had blown over last night makes sense. I am not saying that a tornado was responsible, but certainly there was some burst of high wind in my front yard. That makes a total of 24 tornadoes that have occurred in October in the greater Portland/Vancouver area since around 1950, more than any other month. Is it too early to start blaming El Nino for odd weather phenomenon that might occur this fall and winter?

October 17 - Cut a lot of roses today from most bushes. I am especially glad the deep red and monstrously fragrant, **Love's Promise**, is starting to hit its stride. This rose was a disappointment last year, but now I have some stems to cut, albeit in short vases. Hoping next year is the charm for it considering it is in a great location right next to the new fortuniana rose, **Pilgrim Maid** which literally jumped out of its 2 gallon pot-- growing into a 7 foot behemoth. So, no excuses in 2024.

October 25 - Nicest October weather since 2018. So many buds, so little time before the rainy season sets in around Halloween. Nothing much I can do about it except one final main season spray for blackspot and other fungal leaf spots, downy mildew and spider mites along with their eggs. With 5-6 days left until it rains again, I will choose **Mancozeb** instead of **Daconil Ultrex**. It always seems like **Mancozeb** is better to clean a wide array leaf spots while **Daconil Ultrex** is a bit better for prevention with their "Weather Stick" formula. But either way, they are both good.

October 28 - Winter comes early with nighttime temperatures below 30 for 4 days. Combined with rainfall over 2 inches, botrytis is everywhere. And now with 2 weeks of on-and-off rain, I proclaim the 2023 rose season closed for business. Cutting roses back to around 5 feet or so will now be the main focus of my rose garden chores for the next month or so. I will also be pruning dead and twiggy canes out as well.