

SHOW AND TELL 4: CALIFORNIA SCHADENFREUDE

Hi. My name is Tim and I am a rosaholic.

Chorus: HI, TIM.

Well, the topic tonight is why most rosarians hate California rosarians. Oh, I know they tricked it up with some fancy German title like ‘Shadow of Freud,’ but what they really mean is why do they hate us? The answer is easy: Because we have better rose lives than they do. Why, we get something like six flushes of bloom per growing season. There are some chillblained places in this country where one flush of roses is regarded as continuous bloom.

Not only that, but we work harder too. All through the winter months back East—like September through June, they’re whinging about snow cover and winter mulches and reading the lying catalogs while they sip hot chocolate and eat bon bons. We, on the other hand, are out working and pruning and spraying and defoliating and spraying and labeling and spraying. And it is really hard work—spraying when the State keeps labeling things like Agent Orange dangerous to the health of little children and you have to import it from Arizona. I mean, who cares if a product causes cancer in Norwegian lap rats? Where the hell did they get such a powerful lobby in the first place? None of the Norwegians I know keeps lap rats.

And they are downright ungrateful. Where would they be if we didn’t grow their roses for them? Where do they think roses come from? Puyallup? Salem’s Corners? Now it is true that they grow some roses down in Texas. And it is also true that they manage to grow roses in Portland without any sun. But those are violations of the law of nature. Why, in Florida if the neemytoads don’t get the roses, the alligators get the rosarian. And in New Jersey the air is so bad, you can practically see the roses tiptoeing toward Staten Island.

Another reason they hate us is because we have more fun. We name our roses after ‘Barbra Streisand,’ or ‘Julie Newmar,’ or ‘Betty White.’ They have to name their roses after ‘Frieda Krause.’ Or ‘Happy Butt.’ Or ‘Mme Gregoire Staechelin—I broke a tooth trying to pronounce that one day. And we have rose shows in Spring and Fall—for a total of five months of the year. They’re lucky to have one on July 22nd, or the next day--when summer leaves town. When we stage a rose festival, we actually show roses; there aren’t no stock car races, loop the loop airplane shows, or ersatz beauty and talent parades. Why, we can produce beauty queens on any block in Hollywood. And rose queens, too.

And now some people are complaining that we hog the USEnets and list serves and other corners of the Internet. It is enough to get your blood pressure up to 80 or so. Californians take to the Internet and the like because we are at the forefront of everything. We work at roses twelve months out of the year. While they are planning Christmas gifts and spending money on foolishness, we brag about the roses on our

Christmas dinner table. While they look at pictures of tropical resorts in the middle of their snowfields, we are planting next year's roses. While they are mooning over roses lost in winter on Valentine's Day, we are fertilizing and mulching.

Of course, the real reason they hate us is that our roses are better. Taller bushes, bigger blooms, and cleaner foliage. We don't have any nasty foreign beetles, either. And I might add we have no tornados, hurricanes, or other natural disasters; with the exception of a little earth sliding, all our damage is our own fault.

JD

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