

The Ventura Rose

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VCRS March Meeting & Presentation

*** March 26, 2015 ***

Kitty Belendez

Kaleidoscope of Fabulous Floribundas

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for refreshments
Rose Sharing & Celebration 7:00 p.m.
Guest Speaker Presentation 7:30 p.m.

5100 Adolfo Road, Camarillo, CA
www.venturarose.org

Musings from Elton MacPherson



Hello Fellow Rose Lovers,

Well, they're starting to return after their short winter's nap. GEMINI showed up first this year and was immediately cut and placed in a vase near the TV so I would have my two favorite things together. Two days later DICK CLARK and BARBRA STREISAND came calling and now they too are in their vases. After that it looks like PRINCESS OF MONACO and OLYMPIAD are about two days away, maybe three. Then the others will follow and once again the house will be filled with that beautiful

rose fragrance. Isn't this what we've been waiting for? Isn't this what we've all been missing?

I'll see you at our next meeting on March 26.

Elton MacPherson
VCRS President

VCRS Dues

VCRS Dues are due again! And what a bargain! One year membership for only \$20. Please bring to the meeting or mail to Earl Holst, VCRS treasurer, P.O. Box 102, Agoura Hills, CA 91376-0102. Make payable to VCRS. Thank you!

ARS News

The American Rose Society, Pacific Southwest District has their Winter 2015 Newsletter, **The Rosy Outlook**, available on line. It is a lengthy newsletter but Google "The Rosy Outlook" or "The Bulletin of the Pacific Southwest District of the American Rose Society" and it should pop up.



ARS FIVE YEAR ROSE SURVEY

Now is your chance to rate your roses for inclusion in the *Handbook for Selecting Roses*. The deadline is **March 31**. Go to the ARS website, www.rose.org and find the tab labeled "5 Year" in the menu bar. This will be very easy to do and the options are all on the form. Just check the box. All varieties in the current handbook that have a rating and are at least 10 years old are included.

HATS OFF

Our Program Chairs, Elda and Karen, have lined up the ARS President, Jolene Adams, to come to our VCRS meeting next year (March 24, 2016)! Thank you!



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Fertilizer Happens by Meg Peterson, Master Rosarian

This article is from **ARS & You**, March 2015: Yes, this is a phrase that we've often heard from family members, friends, co-workers and fellow rosarians from time to time as the challenges and vicissitudes of life assail us. Two other colorful phrases can also be heard such as "Fertilizer runs downhill" and the timeless phrase, "Fertilizer hits the fan" (a derivative of the original: "The excrement made physical contact with a hydro-electric powered oscillating air current distribution device"). For the most part these are common slang phrases used as a simple existential observation that life is full of imperfections.

All of these utterances have some basis in one of the most important actions we take with our roses. The first being water and the second most important thing we supply our roses with is fertilizer.

Depending on where you live and how inventive you can be, several things define, limit and determine what you will or will not use in your garden. There are the natural fertilizer and the chemical formulations that can be applied to your roses with a variety of results and expenses. Let's take a look at some of the most common forms of fertilizer and discuss their uses, costs and ultimate result when applied generously to our roses.

Animal wastes such as steer, chicken, horse and pig, once they have been composted are good sources of nitrogen. It is important to remember that fresh manure is most likely too rich in nitrogen and in a form that could have the undesired result of 'burning' the roots of the plant to which it is applied. Cow or steer manure is the one most likely to be found in garden centers. Most of this material is harvested from feed lots where the uric acid levels are quite high. Composting of this material ensures that the smell and acid levels have been abated. There is always the potential unwanted side effect in that quite often weed seeds can also be included and we may notice a new and unidentified crop of weeds growing in the rose bed after application of some manure that hasn't been effectively composted.

Pigs are more 'thrifty' than cows when it comes to producing usable manure. Unwanted weed seeds have been through a more thorough digestive process, but it is more likely to impart a very strong and unwanted 'fragrance' to your garden.

Horse manure has been used for years by people who have an easy access to stables. Depending on the type of bedding that is used, you may have to add additional nitrogen to this fertilizer, especially if wood shavings are used for stall bedding. It is also important to remember that horse manure can carry tetanus and anyone working in the garden should maintain their tetanus immunization every ten years (or as recommended by your doctor).

Chicken manure is also easily available in rural areas, but this product needs careful handling and composting. It is again essential to avoid burning when applied to the rose beds.

Rabbit, Guinea pig and ferret bedding is also a very good source of fertilizer and ferret bedding carries an added bonus in that it is a natural deterrent to rabbits. Ferrets prey on rabbits in the wild so rabbits avoid any area that carries the scent of a ferret.

Since ancient times back as far as the Incas, men have harvested and used guano. This is a potent combination of feces and urine droppings from bats, sea birds and seals found in caves and rocky island outcroppings. Guano consists of ammonia along with uric, phosphoric, oxalic and carbonic acids, as well as some earth salts and impurities. Guano also has a high concentration of nitrates and is virtually odorless. In the garden, guano has several uses such as a soil builder, lawn treatment, fungicide and compost activator to speed up decomposition. It also has nematicide properties in that decomposing microbes help control nematodes in the soil. *(continued on the next page)*

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San Fernando Valley Rose Society Show

The theme for the San Fernando Valley Rose Society's 2015 Annual Rose Show is "Festival of Roses". This will be on Saturday April 11, 2015, from 1:00—4:00 p.m. at the Sepulveda Garden Center located at 16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino, CA 91436.

Entries will be received between 6:30-10:00 a.m. Judges question and answer is 1:30-2:00 p.m. and the award presentations are at 2:00 p.m. The show is open free to the public starting at 1:00 p.m.

There is a new Section X, Non-sanctioned, No award category. This is a great place to ask the judges if they can identify a rose for you.

The entire rose show schedule is on the website www.sfvroses.org. A map to the site is also available. For more information, contact chairperson Janet Sklar, 818-993-6622 (h), 818-337-9970 (c)

It's About Fertilizer Continued:

Many gardeners are committed to organic gardening and in this pursuit they compost lawn (grass and leaves) and garden materials along with kitchen wastes that include both vegetables and fruits. It is not recommended that meat, bone or other fatty wastes be used in the composting process. Some of the following kitchen waste products are: banana peels (puree them in a blender before putting them in the garden to discourage squirrels from digging up your roses); broken, dry egg shells (they contain potassium and calcium); and coffee grounds (magnesium, potassium and nitrogen).

Depending on the availability and inventiveness of the rosarian, you may be inclined to 'formulate' your own special combination of materials for your roses. These products are commonly found at your local farm and garden centers. It is important to balance the materials that you use so that you have a combination of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (commonly known as NPK) to insure that your roses have a balanced diet in order to produce the best roses and the healthiest plants.

Some products that are commonly used include

Bone meal (phosphorus = 0-10-0), kelp meal (1-3-14), blood meal (12-1-1), alfalfa meal (3-2-2), cottonseed meal (6-2-1), fish meal (5-1-1), gypsum and agricultural and dolomitic lime. Blood meal also has been known to discourage rabbits from foraging in your rose bed (but dogs love it).

We would be remiss if we didn't discuss the merits of another organic product that has been used for years by organic gardeners especially in areas where sugar cane is grown. Bagasse is the voluminous waste product from extracting cane sugar. While Bagasse has a pH of 9.2, it has practically no nitrogen content. It does have important amounts of iron, manganese, zinc and copper and its coarse, strong, fibrous structure helps build lightness into the soil and improve air flow. Most sugar mills burn bagasse as their heat source to evaporate water out of the sugary juice squeezed from the canes. At one time there was far more bagasse produced than the mills needed to burn, but these days larger, modern mills generate electricity with bagasse and sell their surplus to the local power grid. Bagasse is also used to make construction fiberboard for sub-wall and insulation and biodegradable paper products.

Depending on your location, size of your garden and proximity to your neighbors, you might like to try Texas Tea. This is a potent combination of alfalfa meal or pellets in a 50 gallon plastic drum of water. This liquid stimulates growth, but the odor produced as it steeps can be overpowering.

Another fertilizer that has gained popularity in recent years is an organic nitrogen fertilizer produced by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District since the 1940s and 1950s. It is processed sludge from their wastewater treatment plant and is made from treated bio-solids. While it is sold as a homeowner and golf course fertilizer, it most likely is not recommended for edible crops for the obvious reason that it is made from human wastes that have gone through an extensive composting process.

Last but not least is the humble servant in the organic fertilizer arena, the earthworm. Whatever the earthworm eats is transformed into organic fertilizer. The worm excretions or 'castings' (*next page*)

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Coming Soon

**March 26: Kitty Belendez
 Kaleidoscope of
 Fabulous Floribundas**

**April 11:
 SFVRS Show 1:00—4:00 p.m.
 Sepulveda Garden Ctr., Encino**

**July 18: Suzanne Horn,
 LadyRedLHW@aol.com
 LA Arboretum
 Consulting Rosarian School**

Board Members

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Fertilizer Happens—The End

In vermiculture are rich in organic nitrates, phosphates, and potash. (NPK=12-5-3). Castings improve the physical soil structure, enrich the soil with micro-organisms, improve water retention, seed germination and root growth and plant structures. Not bad for a little guy!



St. Patrick Rose



May the roses bloom to greet you,
 May the winds be gentle breezes,
 May the sun shine warm upon the soil,
 May the dew fall softly on the petals,
 And may you find peace & joy in your garden.
 -Roz Thebaud