

The Empire State Rosarian

Editor: Pat Shanley

Newsletter of the American
Rose Society New York District

Winter 2022

From the District Director - Louis Arce

Greetings to my fellow Rosarians in the New York District. It is a great pleasure to serve the rose societies in this state. Since mid-September of the past year I have been duly sworn in as district director. Included in this issue is a list of newly appointed Officers and Committee chairs who will be able to assist members in the 7 societies that now comprise our district (Western New York, Finger Lakes, Syracuse, Greater Rochester, Manhattan, Long Island, and Southampton). Congratulations to Leon Ginenthal for working diligently to have a rose society based out of Ithaca that represents the new addition to our district.

For the next three years I will be attentive to the needs of these seven societies as our membership in the American Rose Society requires diligence in being as active as we were before the Covid epidemic. Although we are not completely free of this medical emergency our nation has been developing vaccines and social and political strategies to alleviate the suffering this epidemic has affected our communities.

In the meantime, we must act as if we are back to a normalcy in following through with the many routines and events that distinguish the American Rose Society community throughout the country. We need to resume a district convention and show for this coming September, and we need to reward individuals who are outstanding as consulting rosarians and judges, and those who are exceptional as exhibitors and arrangers. As much as possible we should meet and share our love of gardening with roses. I encourage you to enjoy your rose gardens and to share with others this love of roses.

My parents loved to grow roses and my love of roses developed as a child. At present, I am retired after teaching for 35 years, and I have been growing about 70 roses, from Old Garden to modern types (HT, F, Miniatures, climbers and shrubs). Although I am focused



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From the District Director - Louis Arce, cont.

on cultivating native plants including native roses, my garden is still primarily a rose garden. Since the 1980's, I have been a member of the Long Island Rose Society and more recently I have been a member of the Manhattan Rose Society for over 15 years. I have exhibited individual specimens and in arrangements both locally and in various district shows (New York and in the Penn-Jersey districts). Having served twice as president of the Long Island Rose Society, I have also served on the board of both societies for several decades. I have received both a Bronze Medal and the district Silver Honor Medal. In the district I have served as Consulting Rosarian Chairman for close to 20 years and the last 6 years as Assistant District Director to both Ann and Joe Gibson. To both, I am grateful for their leadership and continued friendship.

Keep in mind that we should diversify our hobby to draw in more members who may approach roses differently than we do. For example, they may be photographers, artists, landscapers, even historians. They may have relatives who grew roses, or they may enjoy travelling to gardens around the world. There are many reasons for loving roses, from cooking to perfumes and fragrances. It is an exhibitor's society within a greater cultural context. Various kinds of people add greater significance to the object of our devotion.

Louis Arce

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The New York District has a new website.

www.arsnewyorkdistrict.org

As new information becomes available on the NY District Convention, it will be posted here. As well as a listing of NY District Awards presented, a photo gallery of NY District Memories and Gardens that are tended by NY District Members.



NY DISTRICT DIRECTORY

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In This Issue

Message from our District Director – page 1

Progress! We Have Resistance to RRD – page 4

RRD GoFundMe – page 6

In Memoriam - page 8-10

Dorothy Storms Receives the David Rink Tribute Award – page 11

Online Consulting Rosarian School – page 12

From Our Local Societies – page 13

Scientific Research on Some Favorite Amendments – page 15

AGRS™ 2022 Winners – page 20

Save the Date - ARS New York District Convention!!

September 9-11, 2022 are the dates to circle on your calendar for the much-postponed NY District Convention, “Roses on the Horizon”, at the Collegian Hotel in Syracuse. Current plans include an arrangement workshop/arrangement judges audit that will offer 4 continuing education credits on Friday, a welcome reception on Friday night, a rose show and educational programs on Saturday, awards banquet and entertainment on Saturday evening, a hospitality room, and an education breakfast offering 1 CR credit on Sunday morning. Please plan to join us in September-it’s been a long time and it will be good to reconnect with friends and celebrate roses. More information will follow.

Paul Zimmerman’s UK Garden Tour Rescheduled! June 2022

[Click Here](#) for more information and how to reserve your spot.
www.paulzimmermanroses.com

Editor’s Note

We have all experienced the Covid-19 pandemic over the past two years. It has changed how we celebrate our love of the rose. And it has changed our view of the world and how we relate to it, perhaps forever. What I hope it has not changed, is our love and respect for each other. Now, more than ever I ask you to remember the words that Bob Martin spoke to me at our first ARS Board meeting together. He said, “Let us be kind to one another.” Remembering and practicing these words and being an active ARS member are the best ways I can think of to honor him. In all the years that I have been editor of this bulletin, I cannot ever remember having so many “In Memoriam” notices. We have lost too many of our fellow rosarians. I hope you will join me in remembering and honoring all of them.

Pat Shanley, ARS President, 2015-2018

Progress! We Have Resistance to Rose Rosette Disease!

Mark Windham

Professor and Distinguished Chair, University of Tennessee

Just a short while ago, the standard line for resistance to rose rosette was that resistance to rose rosette disease was unknown. We can now put that statement to bed! Through efforts by Dave Byrne, Oscar Riera-Lizarazu, and Brent Pemberton (Texas A&M University), Mark Windham, Frank Hale, and Alan Windham (University of Tennessee) and Tom Evans (University of Delaware) and the support of organizations such as the American Rose Garden Selections (ARGS), the Heritage Rose Foundation, and the Research Trust of the American Rose Society and private donors like you, resistance has been identified in ten *Rosa* species, five *Rugosa* hybrids, six rose cultivars and five rose breeding lines. These results took many years of exhaustive research involving thousands of hours of data collection, plant maintenance, virus screenings and data analyses.

However, now is not the time to rest on our laurels. ***Instead, it is urgent that we refocus our work toward getting rose rosette resistance genes into roses needed by the rose industry and for rosarians' gardens.*** Imagine a rose garden where rosarians can once again work toward reaching the maximum potential of hybrid teas, floribundas, grandifloras, climbers, miniatures, etc. without having to scout for rose rosette disease and destroying valued roses that are symptomatic for the disease. No longer would private and public gardens fear the destruction of their roses! This future is now possible, but to accomplish this goal, we must have your support.

Currently, Texas A&M (Fig. 1) is producing thousands of cuttings of seedlings for testing by the University of Tennessee for resistance to rose rosette disease. These seedlings are crosses between susceptible roses with the superior rose characteristics that rosarians crave and plants with rose rosette resistance. Seedlings will be tested for field resistance to rose rosette virus in research plots at the UT Plateau and Research Center near Crossville TN (Fig. 2) and duplicate seedlings will be evaluated in Texas for resistance to foliar diseases such as black spot and cercospora leaf spot and other desirable horticultural traits. This project will be headed by Drs. Dave Byrne and Mark Windham (Fig. 3) and will be also supported by the work of other scientists such as Dr. Oscar Riera-Lizarazu who will be responsible for genetic analysis of field data.

We need your help if we are to achieve our goal of reducing the impact of rose rosette disease on roses you want for your garden. A donation for supporting our research will be directed at producing disease resistant roses. We are committing our time and resources toward this goal, but we cannot be successful without your support. We hope that you will partner with us in this project where the goal is the production of rose rosette resistant roses that you will enjoy growing in your garden for many years to come.

Fig. 1. Students at Texas A&M making cuttings of seedlings to be screened for resistance to rose rosette disease by the University of Tennessee.



Fig. 2. Roses (September 2021) being screened for resistance to rose rosette disease at the University of Tennessee Plateau Research and Education Center.



Fig. 3. Drs. Mark Windham and Dave Byrne evaluating roses for rose rosette virus in Tennessee in September 2021.



Good News! Research, underway at Texas A&M University and the University of Tennessee, has found RRD Resistant Genes. The focus now turns to getting resistance to RRD into the roses we love and want in our gardens. We are one step closer to putting this problem behind us. But we need your help. This is the new GoFundMe page!



Imagine a world without Roses! Rose Rosette Disease (RRD) poses an existential threat to the Rose, the Rose Industry and the Rose Hobby organizations, such as the American Rose Society, Heritage Rose Foundation, World Federation of Rose Societies. It is a virus that attacks the rose and currently there is no treatment or cure.

This research has been mainly funded through a federal program called Specialty Crops Research Initiative (SCRI). The bad news is that the recent SCRI grant proposal wasn't funded and unless we can raise enough money to continue the research through September 2022, when hopefully it will be funded, much of the progress made toward a cure (resistant rose cultivars) will be lost.

Paul Zimmerman has made a video on RRD with Dr. David Byrne and Dr. Kevin Ong from Texas A&M University and Dr. Mark Windham from the University of Tennessee. He has donated that video to be used in conjunction with this GoFundMe page. This is a joint effort between Paul Zimmerman Roses LLC, the University of Tennessee and Texas A&M University. The video is in conversational format and was done via Zoom with many wonderful and informative visuals. They cover its history, how it spreads, how to recognize it, possible ways to prevent it and what to do about it. Then they answer questions submitted by folks on Paul's Facebook Group Page. This video was done independently under Paul Zimmerman Roses. There are no sponsors. The video can be found on Paul's YouTube channel and on the previous page.

gofundme.com/f/raising-funds-for-rose-rosette-disease-research

An Appeal to Support Dr. Mark Windham's Research on RRD

Here is a short 5-minute video explaining the progress made in finding resistance to RRD <https://youtu.be/Oz3v6SUt32A>

Our goal is \$50,000 to help keep the two research gardens going – one at Texas A&M and one at University of Tennessee. The loss of these gardens would set the research back 5-10 years and place the future of Rose in jeopardy. Please donate whatever you can today!

gofundme.com/f/raising-funds-for-rose-rosette-disease-research



For 130 Years!

American Rose Society Founded in 1892 *ARS is the oldest single plant horticultural society in the United States and a founding member of the World Federation of Rose Societies. The ARS is the International Cultivar Registration Authority Rosa (ICRAR), appointed by the International Society of Horticultural Science in 1955. Our mission is education, research and preservation, and we work to ensure the future of the rose. We have a rich history and a great future before us and you can be a part of it!* <http://www.rose.org/>

**EVERY NEW LOCAL SOCIETY MEMBER RECEIVES A
FREE 4-MONTH ARS MEMBERSHIP!!**

In Memoriam –



Remembering Bob Martin ARS President 2018-2021

It is with great sadness that we report that Bob Martin, Immediate Past President of the American Rose Society, a friend and mentor to many, passed away suddenly Friday, November 26, 2021 at his home in Escondido, California.

Bob was a Master Rosarian, an Accredited Horticultural Judge, and an Accredited Arrangements Judge. He was an active rose exhibitor and educator.

He was the 2006 recipient of the ARS Guy Blake Hedrick, Jr. Award for lifetime achievement in rose exhibiting and the 2009 recipient of the ARS Klima Medal for his life-time contribution to rose education.

Bob also hybridized roses, including show roses 'Dona Martin', 'Butter Cream', 'Peter Cottontail', and 'Pasadena Star'. He was a prolific writer, having written more than 700 published articles on roses, was the editor of Horizon Roses, an annual review of the top exhibition roses, and was the author of the book "Showing Good Roses."

Perhaps one of his greatest accomplishments will be remembered as his dedication to completing the Great Garden Restoration at the American Rose Center in Shreveport, LA. At this writing we are close to fulfilling this goal. Bob will be greatly missed. Our deepest condolences to his wife Dona, his family, and many friends.

Editor's note:

Bob was a champion of ARS and increasing ARS membership was always at the forefront of his efforts. I can think of no better way to remember him than being an ARS member and encouraging those who are not yet members, especially from our local societies, to join. This would be a most fitting tribute to a Great Rosarian, who loved the American Rose Society.

In Memoriam, cont.

Murial Prianti passed away on August 25th, after a fierce battle with cancer. Murial was dedicated to the Syracuse Rose Society for many years, serving as President, Treasurer, and on various other offices and committees, as well as chairing their annual June rose show for many years. She chaired NY District committees in the past and served as chair of several NY District conventions. She loved roses, especially Old Garden Roses, and she could usually be found on Wednesday mornings at the Mills Garden. She was an AR Consulting Rosarian and ARS Horticulture Judge and a mentor and friend to many. She will be greatly missed. Condolences can be sent to her husband, John.

John Prianti
858 Stonebridge Rd
Cornwallville, NY 12418

<https://memorials.harterfuneralhome.com/murial-prianti/4706685/service-details.php>

Dorothy and Fred Storms

Fred Storms passed away on Monday, November 15, 2021. Dorothy Storms passed away 5 days later on November 20th.

Dorothy was a mainstay of Syracuse Rose Society, teaching many of their members about growing roses, exhibiting, and doing beautiful arrangements. She and Murial Prianti comprised the Ways and Means Committee and ran the Annual Spring Plant Sale and the Fall Dried Plant Sale for many years. Dorothy was kind and generous with her knowledge, always positive and encouraging. She hosted many tours of her beautiful garden and of her drying barn and always welcomed any members who wanted to learn more to visit and work with her. In October, she was awarded the David Rink Tribute Award for her lifetime of work with roses and rose education. She will be greatly missed. The link to Dorothy's obituary:

<https://obits.syracuse.com/us/obituaries/syracuse/name/dorothy-storms-obituary?id=31612952>

Fred and Dorothy Storms were long-time members of the Syracuse Rose Society, with Fred handling many of the garden tasks that helped Dorothy to produce her prize-winning roses and arrangements. Fred would say, "Dorothy loves roses and I love Dorothy, so I do the spraying!". For many years, Fred sat at the membership table at every SRS meeting, with a smile and usually a joke for each person who stopped to sign in and pick up a name tag.

We will miss both of their smiling faces, good humor and their many contributions to the Syracuse Rose Society over these many years.

The link to Fred's obituary:

In Memoriam <https://obits.syracuse.com/us/obituaries/syracuse/name/frederick-storms-obituary?id=31575615>

In Memoriam, cont.

Annette DelGiorno passed away on Monday, Monday October 5, 2021. Her lovely garden was on the Syracuse Rose Society garden tour last June. The link to her obituary is below. Many of us know her brother and sister-in-law, Peter and Marian DelGiorno, who often judged the Syracuse Rose Shows. Condolences can be sent to Peter and Marian:

Mr. & Mrs. Peter DelGiorno
19 Ashbrook Circle
Rochester, NY 14580

<https://obits.syracuse.com/us/obituaries/syracuse/name/annette-delgiorno-obituary?n=annette-delgiorno&pid=200305425&fhid=15805>

Remembering Fred C. Lorenzen

By Robert Ardini, Historian, Long Island Rose Society, Inc.

The Long Island Rose Society Rose lost one of its pillars with the passing of Fred Lorenzen. Fred served as our President twice - once in the 1970's and then again in the 1990's. Fred and his wife Margaret actively participated in virtually every aspect of the society for decades. Although Fred was recognized as an expert in growing miniature roses, particularly indoors under lights, he often won top awards in our show for other classifications of roses as well. In an effort to recognize Fred's outstanding contribution to the success of the society, a number of years ago he was awarded the society's highest honor - Honorary Life Membership. Fred is survived by his wife Margaret, his daughter Margaret, his son Fred, and five grandchildren. Condolences can be sent to Margaret care of their daughter whose name is also Margaret.

Margaret Erath
17 Hedges Rd
Chester NJ 07930

Pat Bilson – from PennJersey District Director, Bill Dorn

It is with great sadness that I share that our dear member, Pat Bilson passed this week on Wednesday, January 5, 2022. She died suddenly and unexpectedly after complaining of not feeling well. Over the years Pat shared of her time and talent with so many in the local societies she belonged to as well as our Penn-Jersey District members. Her realistic mindset and her gentle spirit will always be remembered.

Final arrangements are pending. Pat is survived by her son, Jack. Condolences can be sent to **Jack Bilson, 250 2nd Avenue, Phoenixville, PA 19460**. We offer our sympathy, prayers, and support to Jack as well as to all of Pat's family and friends at this time of sudden loss. May Pat's memory be a blessing to all who knew her. We grieve her loss. To many in the rose world Pat became a live-long friend. May she rest in peace.

Richard Anthony - It is with sadness that we inform you that Richard Anthony passed away on December 19, 2021. Thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends. By clicking on the link below, you will be able to review his obituary.

<https://www.vindy.com/obituaries/2021/12/richard-jay-anthony-1943-2021/>



Dorothy Storms Receives the David Rink Tribute Award

Dorothy Storms was a very surprised and deserving recipient of the David Rink Tribute Award. The Award was presented to her at the October 14, 2021 Member Meeting at the Reformed Church of Syracuse.

Mary Ann Rink submitted this glowing recommendation for Dorothy:

“Dorothy Storms has been a Syracuse Rose Society member longer than any other current member (since the 1960’s or earlier). While Dorothy never became a Consulting Rosarian, over the years she has done more consultations than any SRS CR. She was always willing to visit others’ gardens or have them come to hers for help with their rose-growing questions.

Fred and Dorothy also frequently opened their garden for garden visits by SRS members and others. For many years Dorothy gave monthly demonstrations at monthly SRS meetings, sharing techniques and encouraging others to try their hand at this art. She presented countless programs at meetings, workshops, conventions, etc. on all aspects of rose culture and exhibiting-both horticulture and arrangements. Until she was no longer physically able to, Dorothy was one of the top exhibitors in the Syracuse Rose Society in both horticulture and arrangements classes. At the same time, she was always available prior to and during the shows to offer help and encouragement to others. She also grew huge amounts of plants suitable for drying to be used at the annual fall dried plant sale held at the Regional Market. For many years, this was the main source of income for the SRS. Leading up to this event, Dorothy gave presentations teaching others how to collect and dry plant material for this event.

Dorothy, with her easy-going manner, gentle way of teaching, and hard work, has over her many years as a member, made an invaluable contribution to the knowledge of the society members and others, to encouraging new memberships, and to the financial strength of the Syracuse Rose Society.”

There is no question that Dorothy fulfilled the criteria to be an award recipient, based on her knowledge of roses, role as a mentor and educator to many rosarians young and old, leadership within the Syracuse Rose Society, beautiful display of roses in arrangements and shows, and her cherished friendship with rose friends. Let us all strive to be as good rosarians as Dave Rink and Dorothy Storms, and follow Dave's parting words to us: "I promised this year would be about 'Growing and Caring for Roses, Arranging with Roses, Photographing Roses, Having Rose Fun and Fostering Rose Friendships'. This Award is a perpetual trophy, planned to circulate to future winners.

ONLINE CONSULTING ROSARIAN SCHOOL SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY

PLEASE NOTE the dates - CHEMICAL SAFETY is February 26, 2022.

For your information: An Online CR School has been prepared for February 2022. Please see dates/times below. We have included qualifications to become a CR and the application form. Also included are links to the Application for a New CR form, Other CR information and forms as well as the CR Manual. Feel free to share this information through your Local Society and District Newsletters.

Prospective Candidates must contact their District Chair of CRs and complete an application. The District Chair of CRs will send the application to the National Chairs and ARS HQ (carol@rose.org).

ARS HQ will check eligibility and notify National Chairs. If National Chairs approve the application, they are placed on a list for seminar/school information. If National Chair does not approve application, reason will be given and District Chair of CRs will notify the prospective candidate.

Candidate forms must be received by ARS HQ by **January 31, 2022.**

All eligible CR candidates will receive an email with the CR Exam information and test link following the last session. The online test will be available from 8:00 am CST 3/2/2022 through midnight 3/3/2022, CST

Please contact Jane Knoeck, NYD Chair, Consulting Rosarians if you are interested in becoming an ARS Consulting Rosarian. j.chorder@gmail.com

CR SCHOOL/SEMINARS 2022 - CR Manual/Information/Forms:

[Member Forms | American Rose Society](#) *Scroll down to Consulting Rosarian Forms*

DATE/TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
February 5, 2022 1 PM CDT	CR Mission & Ethics Soil & Water	Diane Sommers Bill Kozemchak
February 12, 2022 1 PM CDT	Fertilizer	Brenna Bosch
February 19, 2022 1 PM CDT	Insects and Diseases	Baldo Villegas
February 26, 2022 1 PM CDT	Chemical Safety	Don Swanson
March 2-3, 2022 (Opens 3/2/2022 at 8 AM CST: Closes 3/3/2022 midnight CST)	Online Exam	

From Our Local Societies – 2022 Events scheduled to date

Finger Lakes/Southern Tier Regional Rose Society.

We cover more than a six-county radius and began virtual meetings in late 2020. For further information contact Leon Ginenthal. derrosenmeister@gmail.com

Greater Rochester Rose Society – will continue to have first Tuesday monthly meetings and publish a monthly newsletter. Until the Covid situation settles down, meetings will be online. 2022 schedule of programs/events TBD. Contact Carol Basener for further information - basener325@gmail.com

Long Island Rose Society January Board meeting will be virtual. The June rose show is scheduled for June 12th. Remaining programs/events TBD

Manhattan Rose Society – www.manhattanrosesociety.com

2022 Events – We have been asked by our members to continue presenting our programs online. All programs will be via GoToMeeting, until further notice! We have had attendance from all over the country as well as Canada!

Saturday, March 12th @ 2:00pm ET - via GoToMeeting!

Members will be sent an email invite the week of the event.

Heidi Mortensen, Star Roses® and Plants Rose Program Manager & Bloomables® Brand Manager - presenting a new fragrant rose series under the Bloomables® brand that includes many of the wonderful Kordes® genetics including Arborrose®, Sunbelt®, Kolorscape®, Veranda® and the Eleganza® series.

Saturday, April 23, 2022 @ 2:00pm ET - via GoToMeeting!

Members will be sent an email invite the week of the event.

Gaye Hammond presenting: “All the Dirt on Soil”

Join us as Gaye takes us on a deep dive on the importance of good soil, moves in to take the mystery out of soil testing and pH, gives us up to the minute research-based info on fertilizers, and ends with the importance of mulch - and it's not just for "pretty!"

Syracuse Rose Society – www.syracuserosesociety.org

All regular meetings are held at 7:00PM on Zoom or at the Reformed Church, corner of Melrose and Teall Ave., on block south of James.

On January 13, 2022, the new officers for this year will be installed. Voting will be by ballot and installation of 2022 officers will be via a zoom meeting. There will not be a live program. Planned activities for this year are TBD at this time.

Southampton Rose Society - www.southamptonrosesociety.org

April 16, 2022 – Pruning and Planting Workshop with Peter Bertrand (TBC)

May 6, 2022 – Children’s Mini Rose and Art Workshop with Peter Bertrand (TBC)

June 11, 2022 – Rose Show/ Day

Monday, July 4, 2022 – July 4th Parade

Friday, August 5, 2022 – Cocktail Party Fundraiser (Location TBA)

Autumn Event – (TBD)

From Our Local Societies – cont.

Western New York Rose Society

Topic	Date	Speaker
No meeting	Jan 19	-
Miniatures and Minifloras – where did they come from, what are they, photos	Feb 16	In Person Meeting Zoom speaker (Jolene Adams) jolene_adams@sonic.net
Planting, Pruning, spraying, fertilizing	Mar 16	Steve and partner
Invasive Pests	Apr 20	John Farfaglia (Cornell Extension Niagara) **
Arrangements for show	May 18	Jane Knoeck
Showing Your Roses	Jun 15	Steve Styn
Rose show awards, short program	Jul 20	Viewing party of a YouTube video (e.g., Leon or Paul Zimmerman)
Lunch and Tour of Delaware Park Rose Garden	Aug 17	Daytime meeting
DIY Workshop	Sep 21	Julie Hughes
Winterizing your Roses and planning for next year	Oct 19	New Winterizing cheat sheet and Panel discussion of Consulting Rosarians
What roses to order and when	Nov 16	John and Bonnie Vitale
Holiday Party	Dec 7	-

** tentative program speaker.

Notes:

- Plantasia is March 17-20th
- Picnic is August 20th
- Field Trip, and tour, to Niagara Parks Rose Garden in Niagara Falls. Over 2,400 roses, in September

Scientific Research on Some Favorite Amendments

By Carolyn Elgar, OCRS Master Rosarian

Reprinted with permission from The Cherokee Rose, Central Florida Heritage Rose Society

After hard pruning roses in the late winter/early spring, the rosarian's thoughts turn to ideas about organic additions to the garden that will enrich the soil and promote more growth and flowers. Surveying the literature and the internet about rose culture results in a number of suggestions about how to give your roses an extra boost or special treat. But how does the gardener decide what to add and when? Plenty of rosarians will give you advice, and the companies that make these products will publish lots of positive information on their websites to encourage you to buy them. Probably the best indicator is also the most factual one: research conducted by scientists.

But research is so boring and hard to read, you say. Well, I will try to make this as painless as possible. Here's a review of some popular organic amendments and fertilizers, along with what the research supports.

Alfalfa Meal/Tea

Alfalfa as a fertilizer provides a number of nutrients to your plants; it is a good source of slow release organic nitrogen. However, the ingredient that makes alfalfa unique is its growth stimulant, triacontanol, a compound that has been proven to increase cell division and produce large root and shoot mass. Research on this originated in 1977 when a professor at Michigan State University, Stanley Ries, published an article claiming that alfalfa meal and chloroform extracts of the meal increased the growth and yield of several plant species. Since that time a number of studies have confirmed that triacontanol in alfalfa and alfalfa water extracts stimulate plant growth, even in the dark, independent of photosynthesis.

There are a few caveats to consider here. First, the studies concentrated mostly on the compound itself, rather than the alfalfa that contains it. Triacontanol itself is available as a liquid additive that can be sprayed on plants or used as a drench; apparently the compound is difficult to extract or combine with other additives. But Ries's initial experiments relied on alfalfa plants as a source of triacontanol, and we know alfalfa contains this chemical substance. Alfalfa meal is ground and, perhaps when well watered in, the triacontanol may become available. Another concern of some scientists is that alfalfa meal may make alkaline soils more alkaline. However, the studies do not show this as a permanent effect and the pH levels did not increase to damaging levels. Using alfalfa meal as a tea may reduce this effect, and it gives the meal time to ferment and perhaps more effectively release its triacontanol.

Earthworm castings

Worm castings are what earthworms leave after digesting food and soil. Worms feed on many forms of organic matter in the soil including plant parts, animal and insect remains, bacteria, and fungi. When these materials pass through the worm's gut, their nutrients are changed into a form that is more available for plant uptake, such as the nitrate form of nitrogen, soluble potassium, and exchangeable phosphorus and calcium. The castings hold two or three times their weight in water, making its retention in the soil another benefit. The surface area of the castings is larger than that of soil particles and supports beneficial microbial activity.

Research at *Ohio State University* that compared the effects of the fertilizer components that were the same as those contained in worm castings found that these components did not produce the same growth responses as the castings, leading to the assumption that the castings produced some kind of hormone-induced activity or that some kind of growth regulators were involved. *The growth responses of plants from vermicompost appears more like 'hormone-induced activity' associated with the high levels of humic acids and humates in vermicompost rather than boosted by high levels of plant-available nutrients.*

(Soil Ecology Laboratory, Ohio State University)

University plant growth research at *Ohio State, Cornell University, U.C. Davis*, and at other agriculture organizations have shown that plants treated with worm castings had increased plant size and bloom quantity and quality. The optimum application rate is a ratio of 10 to 20 percent castings to soil. A larger application did not improve results.

Finally additional testing has shown using worm castings decreases the number of aphids, mealy bugs, and other arthropod pests. Earthworms produce a high level of chitinase enzymes in their castings. Chitinase dissolves the chitin in insect skeletons. Insects can detect the presence of chitinase in the soil and avoid it. Thus, worm castings can work as an effective pest repellent.

Humic acid

Humic acid is the carbon-rich material that remains after years of decomposition of living organisms such as plants, insects, and animals. It is produced in peat and coal. It occurs naturally as a liquid, but when the liquid is dehydrated, it leaves humates that contain the same compounds and have the same benefits as the liquid. Humic acid and humates improve the cation exchange capacity of the soil; this interaction of positive and negative ions allows it to hold onto nutrients. The crumb structure of the soil improves which enhances water retention and oxygen distribution. Humic acid can buffer high or low pH in the soil, making nutrients and trace elements that might be bound in the soil more available to the plant. As a result, photosynthesis is improved, increasing the sugars in the plant and promoting growth.

Numerous research studies conducted in the last 25 years have found that applying humic acid to the soil helps break up compacted soils, enhances water retention, improves root development, stimulates the development of beneficial microflora populations, and chelates nutrients, such as iron, so that the plant can absorb them. *Various micronutrients are further complexed with humic acid to form chelates - zinc, calcium, iron, and others... humic acid had beneficial effects on nutrient uptake by plants and was particularly important for the transport and availability of micronutrients. (Journal of Plant Nutrition, 2008)*

Mycorrhizae

Mycorrhizal fungi create a symbiotic relationship with a plant's roots. Because the filaments that this fungi produces as it grows from the roots are finer than root hairs and grow further into the soil, a plant's access to water and nutrients is increased. In exchange, the fungi feed on sugars from the plant. Around 15 to 20 years ago mycorrhizal fungi was considered the best new thing for roses; nurseries offered expensive inoculants to apply to the soil. Since that time information has become available to the home gardener about the fungi's fragility. Disturbing the soil and using chemical fertilizers will kill this beneficial web. Soils high in phosphorus, the nutrient that many rosarians use for increased bloom, will significantly reduce the amounts of this fungi.

The fungi are plant specific and are most beneficial in poor or unfertilized soils. General opinion now is that our garden soils already contain many of the nutrients that added mycorrhizae would capture; in addition, the fungi native to your soil may already exist as well as it can in your pampered garden. Many balanced organic fertilizers now contain a combination of different mycorrhizal fungi; buying a special inoculant is not necessary.

Seaweed/Kelp

Seaweed amendments can be liquid or solid, in emulsions or meals. The major nutrient that seaweed has the most of is potassium. But the special thing about seaweed is the growth stimulant it contains; in addition, seaweed has many trace minerals (over 60), amino acids, and vitamins that promote plant and soil health. The carbohydrates in seaweed provide food for beneficial microorganisms. Liquid seaweed can act as a soil conditioner, improving its texture and water retention.

Research supports the biostimulant effects of seaweed, and it has been used in crop production. Several university studies have demonstrated the impressive results of using seaweed. *The wide range of growth responses induced by seaweed extracts implies the presence of more than one group of plant growth promoting substance/hormones. (Journal of Plant Growth Regulation, 2009)*

The same studies determined that drought stressed plants treated with seaweed extract and humic acid increased their root mass by 21-68%. Researchers found that seaweed products create abiotic stress tolerance in plants. Although the action of the compounds that do this and increase plant growth are not clearly known, there is no doubt about seaweed's benefits.

Another interesting aspect to the research on seaweed is the discovery of the inhibiting impact of seaweed on root-knot nematodes. Nematodes are one of the rose lovers' major frustration; because the damage occurs under the ground, it is hard to diagnose, other than observing the weakening of the plant. *Seaweeds... showed more or less similar suppressive effect on root rotting fungi and root knot nematode to chemical fungicides (Topsin-M) and nematicide (carbofuran). (Journal of Applied Botany and Food Quality, 2011)* Application of seaweed can result in decreased levels of female nematodes and their eggs.

Fish Emulsion

Fish emulsion is made by processing the remains of fish products, grinding them into a slurry, and then straining the liquid. Its NPK is around 5-2-2, making it a good source of organic nitrogen. This is multiplied by the fact that the nitrogen in fish emulsion is quickly converted, for an organic fertilizer, into a form (mineralization) that the plant's roots can absorb, around two weeks after application. Fish emulsion may also contain micronutrients and whatever trace elements the manufacturer adds.

The research on fish emulsion is ambivalent. Most of the studies are done for the purpose of comparing it to chemical sources of nitrogen, in hopes of using it as a substitute that is organic and works well in poor soil. Many of the more recent studies have been based in third world countries where soil is not fertile and chemical fertilizer is expensive. For example, a paper published in Ethiopia in 2013 concluded *the yield harvested from tomato and onion treated with fish offal's fertilizer is as comparable as that of chemical fertilizer. (African Journal of Agricultural Research)* Other studies determined that fish emulsion provided benefits in some ways but not in others. One could conclude that fish emulsion is no better than any other organic source of nitrogen. But the relatively quick mineralization rate of the nitrogen in it makes fish emulsion a good choice when you want to give your plants a quick shot of organic nitrogen that won't burn roots.

Gypsum

Gypsum is calcium sulfate, a naturally occurring mineral. The benefits of gypsum are highly dependent on the type of soil in your garden. Although gypsum has been considered a soil amendment, its real impact lies in the fact that it is high in calcium and sulfur. Both of these elements can upset the balance of nutrients in the soil if it has too much of them. Soils that are heavy in clay, weathered, or high in sodium benefit from gypsum application. High sodium levels will reduce the soil's ability to absorb water and make the soil more compact. By absorbing sodium gypsum makes the soil more water absorbent and permeable. But most home gardens do not have these levels of sodium in their soil.

Although it is high in sulfur, this sulfur is not the elemental sulfur that acidifies soil. Thus gypsum has very little impact on the pH of the soil. Gypsum is more useful in agricultural applications in large growing fields than in the home garden. Although it may not impact pH, it will add calcium to the soil that will have negative effects if the soil already has adequate quantities of this element. *Soils in low-precipitation regions tend to be neutral or basic in pH with considerably high concentrations of Ca... Typically, gypsum is not necessary in such regions due to the high native Ca content. (Advances in Agronomy, 2017)* If soil compacting is a problem, the home gardener can remedy this by adding compost, a substance that will not affect the balance of nutrients in the garden.

Epsom Salts

What better way to end this review than to look at the controversial topic of Epsom salts and its affect on plants. Exhibitors and organic gardeners habitually put down Epsom salts to give their roses a little more color with its magnesium content or encourage basal breaks. Its use is advised by many gardening magazines and websites. It has been recommended by gardeners and professionals for years. These word of mouth endorsements from experts may be enough to convince a rose lover to use it on their roses.

Once again, overabundance of this nutrient will affect the uptake of others. Chances are your garden soil has enough magnesium; it may not be available to the plant because of high levels of another nutrient, such as potassium. Adding more will not get more magnesium to the plant. Although sandy and acidic soils may be magnesium deficient, a garden lover's fertilized soil probably isn't, and if it is, again compost will help level things out without affecting nutrient balance. And if that is not enough to convince you, read the following.

A soil test is absolutely required before using this chemical.(Washington State University)

Epsom salt has not been demonstrated through research to help roses grow or bloom better. (Kellogs Garden)

The Bottom Line

The above reference to the necessity of a soil test is very relevant when using amendments that contain plant nutrients. Soil pH has the most direct effect on plants' nutrient absorption, and high levels of nutrients or micronutrients, with the possible exception of nitrogen, will inhibit the effectiveness of others.

There's a balanced, chemical, ionic dance going on in your soil. Other factors, such as beneficial microbes and bacteria contribute to soil health as well. When it comes to nutrient interaction, chemistry is a major factor contributing to success or failure. It's a complex, natural harmony.

Although we want to pamper our roses and produce the largest blooms, we could inadvertently become our garden's biggest enemy if we try to change things without the proper information. Before you add potential unneeded nutrients to your soil, check out what is already there with a soil test. But you can still add good things to the garden that will enhance your roses' growth and development. Worm castings, humic acid, kelp, and fish emulsion won't change your soil pH and have been researched and consistently found to have positive, nondestructive benefits for the garden. You can't go wrong with them. Make sure to read the directions on the product you choose for the proper application. There's no point in using more than your need and it won't benefit your plants.

References available upon request.

Product	Benefits	Research Results	Recommendation
Worm castings	mineralizes nutrients; improves soil texture and water retention; increases microbial activity; contains growth hormones	Very positive	Use it
Humic acid	improves nutrient retention in soil; improves soil texture and water retention; chelates minerals for improved uptake	Very positive	Use it
Seaweed/kelp	60 trace elements; growth stimulant; nematode suppression	Very positive	Use it
Fish emulsion	mineralizes nutrients quickly; 5% nitrogen	Ambivalent	Use it for nitrogen
Alfalfa	contains triacontanol, a growth stimulant;	Positive for triacontanol	Other things are better
Mycorrhizae	increases roots' nutrient and water uptake	Good for poor soils	Get it in organic fertilizer
Gypsum	contains calcium and sulfur; decreases soil sodium	Use for calcium	Get a soil test first
Epsom salts	contains magnesium sulfate	Has no effect on plant	Get a soil test first

Carolyn Elgar is a Master Rosarian with the Orange County Rose Society. The article was previously published in the March, 2020 of the Rose Gazette, the newsletter of the Orange County Rose Society and is a 2020 Award of Merit winner.

ARS Helps Local Societies keep in touch via GoToMeeting

ARS is making GoToMeeting, an online platform, available to the local societies to help them keep in touch with their members during this time of Pandemic. You have the option of purchasing a license for your society or using the community license from ARS. The community license is on a first come, first serve basis. An individual license offers unlimited use on your own time schedule.

This is a great way to be able to be together, safely and to continue to enjoy programs on roses. Details on the ARS website, www.rose.org

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Easy on the Eyes™ - Regional Choice Award Winner in the Northeast, Northwest, South Central, Southeast and Southwest Regions and Fragrance Award Winner. Bred by Tom Carruth. Introduced by Weeks Roses.



Pink Freedom - Regional Choice Award Winner in the South Central, Southeast, Southwest, Northeast, Northwest Regions. Bred by Christian Bedard. Introduced by Weeks Roses.



Pretty Polly™ Pink - Regional Choice Award Winner in the Northwest, Northwest, Southeast, and South Central Regions. Bred by David Zlesak. Introduced by Star Roses and Plants.

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All roses entered into the AGRS™ are tested for two years in six different geographical regions, each containing two test gardens. Additional characteristics that are evaluated include: vigor, foliage, proportion, plant habit, flowering effect, rebloom habit, bloom form, aging quality of blooms, fragrance and hardiness. In order for a variety to be granted an award, it must demonstrate superior performance in at least three (3) of the six (6) regions entered. By recognizing and recommending the best garden-worthy rose varieties for the various regions of the United States through testing, the AGRS™ has the goal of providing objective and reliable information to the general public.

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