

IN THE GARDEN

July – by Jolene Adams

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF ROSE GARDENING

(a cautionary tale for your summer reading)

1. Neglect. Hopefully, readers of these pages have not, and will not, commit this most prevalent sin. Walk down any street, road or lane and you will find numerous gardens with some roses growing and blooming despite being unpruned, unfed and uncultivated since the day they were planted. Other gardens will show the bountiful reward that the rose supplies in return for your care.
2. Greed. Many beginners, whether rose growers or general gardeners, commit this sin. By overindulgence in the catalogues or seeking 'bargains', they create beds of mixed varieties, usually one of each or in pairs. No thought is given to the overall effect of mixed planting (size, shape, colors, growth habit) when the beds are mature and in full bloom. If it is necessary to have mixed varieties, be wary of mis-matched habits of growth.
3. Over-indulgence. The sin of over-indulgence includes over-feeding, excess spraying, etc. Roses like balanced diets; generally a balanced rose fertilizer after spring pruning, again after the first flush of bloom, and again in late August to early September to assist maturing of the stems. The bushes need assistance in the fight against pests and diseases, but they do not require unapproved 'cocktails' and they need the correct amount at each application. Too much of any good thing can turn it into a bad thing.
4. Thoughtlessness. Rose growing is not a stereotyped practice. A regular inspection of plants and beds will usually indicate when something is wrong. The American Rose Society's publications, and our local society newsletter, will help you if in doubt or, if you are still uncertain, ask a Consulting Rosarian.
5. Untidiness. This sin is committed mainly during the autumn when thoughts begin to wander away from gardening towards indoor activities. It is a willful, sinful act to leave your bushes in unkempt beds going into winter, particularly if the beds are smothered in infected, fallen foliage. During the busy summer, removal of non-flowering growth and spent blossoms must be attended to.
6. Possessiveness. As the beginner becomes more involved in our wonderful hobby, this sin is often committed. Planting more and more rose bushes is fine, but not to the exclusion of other plants. A whole range of other flowers and plants will complement the roses and many are happy to share the same bed and environment. A visit to the gardens of many of our local members will provide a wealth of ideas to prevent this sin.
7. Envy. The sin of over-indulgence in others' gardens or exhibits at rose shows. Combat this by committing less of the first six sins and tending your roses with love and care – you can grow them equally as well.

If you have garden questions, problems, or just want some personal assistance, the following individuals can lend a hand with your roses. These people are accredited by the American Rose Society as Consulting Rosarians and are mandated by our organization to help, advise, and educate the public in all things roses. So please, avail yourself of this huge resource of knowledge (listed on our top page, under Consulting Rosarians).