

IN THE GARDEN

September by Thomas Bolden

Hopefully, everyone has had a good summer. Here in the lower part of the Bay it has been hot and dry. Water is key at this point in the season. We have not had any substantial rain in a long time and the ground is very dry and does not retain water. Be sure to maintain your watering schedule. If you have a drip system check to make sure none of the lines are plugged and that each plant is getting water. If you are watering manually be sure to maintain your schedule, particularly if you grow your roses in pots. I am horrible at growing any plants in pots if they are not connected to a drip system. If your roses are in the ground, you can miss a few waterings and still have live plants. They will not thrive, but they have a chance as their roots can search for their own water.

I applied my last granular fertilizer for the year around Labor Day, but I do still apply some liquid fertilizer and I will continue to do this until the next bloom cycle begins.

My yard is in preparation for the Fall rose shows, so most of my plants are cut back, but there is still plenty of work to be done. I have a constant battle with invasive grasses and other weeds. I am also making sure that I have any leaves that have fallen from my bushes cleaned up around the yard.

As I go around the yard I am evaluating my roses as well. I am making decisions on which plants get another year and which may need to be replaced. I have not filled up my yard yet, but I will still get rid of an underperforming bush.

My other nemesis has been gophers. They can make a real mess of your yard. I have all my bushes in gopher cages to help limit any damage. I need to constantly monitor them though to make sure the baskets are intact. I buy these at hardware stores and nurseries.

With the Fall Rose Shows coming up, pay close attention to your bushes and pluck off side buds to have single stem bloom exhibits and pluck off the terminal bud in a cluster for your sprays. You want to do this as soon as possible to limit any scarring from the removal. Terminal buds for Floribundas can be tricky. For some roses if you removed them too late you will end up with a gap at the top of your exhibit. There are 2 roses that I grow that need that terminal bud to stay to get good spacing of the blooms. Those roses are 'Playboy' and 'Playgirl'.

Lastly, roses are on sale all around the area. Start making your list for planting in the winter.

And most of all, Happy Gardening!