

## Talking Roses with Ludwig

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*'Through all the hectic year-end and Christmas preparations – allow yourself to SLOW DOWN and let the Spirit of Christmas envelop you in the warmth and joy it has to offer. Spend some time in God's garden – Creation!'*

**Noeleen Mullet (Environmentalist)**

### **In the Rose Garden with Ludwig**

In many ways November seemed to be just an extension of the October rose month, not just for us in Gauteng but virtually countrywide. This was due to the relatively early flowering and the welcome rain showers experienced in Gauteng, KZN, the Eastern Cape and in the Western Cape, even though it was out of season. The rain was not enough to fill all the dams, but it brought life and hope to the drought stricken regions.

The usual dip in flowering in November was minimal for us and most varieties are already showing off their second flush. With such fast new growth, the blooms are smaller but make up for it in quantity. From all the sprouting we see it is clear that we are going to have an impressive "rosy" December.

In our test field, it is now easy to see the difference between fast or slow repeat-flowering varieties, as well as those that form hips. For many of them it is thumbs down.

The repeat flowering varieties in our test fields are clearly distinguished now.

Naming a new rose variety after a School or College is a wonderful way to pay homage to these institutions that are the cornerstone of education.

Schools are so pivotal in all our lives. There is no better way to appreciate, be reminded and stay part of the school community than planting a namesake rose in your own garden.

This past month, as the school year comes to an end, we have had the privilege to be able to honour four institutions with THEIR very own rose. Plants are available from the specific school or any of our branches.

### **CURRO**

Halmar shaking Dr Hennie Rheeders hand at the unveiling of the Curro rose during CURRO Hazeldean's 10th birthday celebration. It was a huge surprise to everyone attending the gala dinner. Streamers shot up into the air, bright lights spelled out the name and champagne flowed...

The stately plant of this newly named, striking Hybrid Tea, Curro!

### **Legacy of Bellavista, St Dunstan College, Union Schools 100**

#### **Happenings**

**On Thursday 16 December I lead our traditional Walk and Talk** through the various interesting aspects of rose growing and propagation, with explanations and demonstrations. It usually takes 2 hours. It is not strenuous walking and our tractor train stays close behind for those who find the long walk too exhausting. Not knowing whether the weather will be sun or rain, do bring an umbrella, hat and wear good walking shoes. We start walking at 9h30. Anyone is welcome to bring samples of blooms for identification or "problem" leaves and branches.

The only day of the year the Farm is closed, is in on Christmas day, the 25<sup>th</sup> of December.

If you are looking for rosy Christmas gifts our shops have just the right thing!

The classy and fabulous Miss Black Rose laptop / hand bag is marked down to R400.00 for Christmas.

### **Step by Step Rose Care for December**

Leaves on plants and especially on roses assure that the plants can function optimally, even during the heat of summer.

Availability of water for the roots to absorb is obviously the most important requirement for maintaining a good leaf cover. Lots of water available allows the bush to produce new stems with leaves and blooms.

When a rose is growing very actively and the water is suddenly withdrawn, due to the pot drying out or a sudden spike of heat after overcast, cool weather, the soft tips wilt and the young leaves shrivel and dry out from the outside.

Watering timeously and sufficiently will stop this immediately. The plants miraculously recover.

Even though these leaves have dried out, the rose received water and kept on growing and the bloom developed properly.

Absorbed water is always drawn to the top leaves and only when they are saturated will water be directed to the leaves lower on the bush.

Since these are mostly in the shade, photosynthesis is limited and they are not so important to the bush apart from shading the branches and roots.

With less water going into these leaves they gradually dry out, turning brown from the tip. In severe cases they eventually dry up completely and drop off.

It is not a disease and can be stopped by getting more water to the roots.

The bushes do adjust to situations when not enough water is available. New growth stops altogether or the bush just produces very short stems with small blooms.

This standard rose does not receive quite enough water. As it is in the shade, the leaves don't shrivel, but the some leaves become yellow and drop. The plant just stands and doesn't really flower. Increasing the watering would quickly rectify this.

With good deep drenching rains, the roses flourish and the leaves become larger and softer.

They become more susceptible to the fungus disease Black Spot.

Preventative spraying is obviously the best protection against leaf drop. The modern Fungicides are translaminar or systemic, which means they are absorbed by the leaves within minutes after spraying and protect the leaves from the inside. It cannot be washed off by rain or overhead watering.

We find that Chronos, which is part of Ludwig's Cocktail, is the most effective and it can be alternated with Rose Protector. Spraying every two to three weeks during normal weather patterns will suffice. With daily rain increase spraying to once a week.

So far, beetle activity on our farm has been quite limited, although all the blooms on some of our fragrant specimens were devoured.

In addition to the common CMR and Fruit chafer beetles there were also green and black and striped ones. Spot spraying sorted this out. I keep a "loaded" 1 litre spray pump on my Golf cart for this purpose.

Fertilising depends very much on water availability. With very limited water available rather do not apply fertiliser.

With normal watering of the rose beds the monthly application of VIGOROSA can be kept up.

For neat looking bushes at Christmas keep on grooming the roses by dead heading and cutting off twiggy growth. It is not necessary though if you will be away from home.

The fungus, Rose Rust, seems to be more of a problem in regions with periods of cool moist weather.

It is very much variety related. We are keeping records of this in the Midlands and Western Cape (that is when they experience rainy weather) and are considering creating a symbol for it in our catalogue.

Readers might have noted that I have hardly touched on the subject in the past and even ignored this on our page in the catalogue "What is wrong with my roses."

During my last visit with rose breeders in Europe, I noted that they are not much concerned with black spot susceptibility anymore. The selection of resistant novel varieties has negated it, but rose rust remains a tougher fungus to overcome. The problem with rust is well known to growers of apples, pears and strawberries, all belonging to the Rosacea family.

Rose Rust – *Phragmidium tuberculatum*, is virtually impossible to eradicate.

However, certain fungicides can bring relief. Rose Protector and Rose Care3 with the active ingredient *Propikanozole* have a certain control but it is very essential to alternate with other fungicides.

Funginex with the active ingredient *triforine* is one. The organic Plantvax with the active ingredient *Oxycarboxin* is used by fruit farmers and not yet available to gardeners.

In the meantime, I suggest that plants which are easily riddled with rose rust are eliminated from the garden.

### **Roses of the Month: Perfume Passion KORpauvio (N)**

This is a powerful, eco-chic rose. The outstanding characteristics of this rose guarantee a constant supply of large, passionately fragrant blooms.

It is an Antico Moderno rose that reveals its nostalgic shape as the bloom unfolds.

Even though the blooms are highly fragrant, the petals are thick, which makes their vase life very good.

The totally charming blooms are a mingle of pink on a white base.

### **News from our Rose Centres**

December is a great time to plant roses in your garden and we look forward to welcoming you to any one of our rose centres accross the country!

### **Ludwig's Rose Farm**

Join Ludwig for a walk and talk on the 16th of December at 9:30. For more info see above.

It remains for me to thank you for your support during 2017!

Please be safe during your travels and enjoy your well deserved break.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

Rose greetings,

*Ludwig*