

CARE OF ROSES IN THE RAINY SEASON

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The major insect pests and fungus diseases which roses are likely to get in the rainy season are dealt with briefly keeping the beginner in mind. For more detailed information, Sri N.G. Reddy's article in the Hyderabad Rose Society's 'Souvenir' of January 1978 should be consulted.

Diseases:

1. The major disease which occurs in the rainy season is BLACK SPOT characterised by the appearance of irregular black spots mainly on the older leaves. The infection increases during periods of prolonged rain and is most rampant by the end of the season viz. September. The easiest method of control when one has a few plants is to pick off the leaves and burn them as and when symptoms appear. Spraying at weekly to 10 days intervals with DITHANE (one table spoon wet table powder in 5 litres of water) will keep the disease under control.

2. The other important fungus disease of roses viz. MILDEW does not normally appear in the rainy season.

Pests:

The chief pests of roses which occur in this season are:

1. Thrips.
2. Leaf eating caterpillars of various types.
3. Cockchafer grub and beetle.
4. Red scale.

1. Thrips: Thrips which are minute insects causing wrinkling of the foliage and browning of flower buds are easily controlled by spraying ROGOR (two teaspoon in 5 litres of water). Care should be taken to cover the underside of the leaf and the spray can be applied even to the flower buds if thrips are present there. Repeat at weekly intervals.

2. Caterpillars: In a small collection these pests are best handpicked and destroyed. Control can be had by spraying B.H.C. wettable powder (50 %) using a dose of 1 tablespoon in 5 litres water.

3. Cockchafer: This causes trouble in two ways:

a) The grub present in the soil onto the roots and can be controlled by killing the pest (which is normally to be found in fresh manure) before using the manure for re-potting. Always suspect cockchafer if the surface of the earth in the pot looks perpetually wet and the plant loosely anchored. It is best to re-pot immediately while removing grubs present, but if this is not feasible, a teaspoon of wet table B.H.C. powder can be applied to each pot or plant in the ground and watered in.

b) The cockchafer beetles appear at night and eat the leaves and buds. The simplest control is to pick off the beetles manually they are easily visible if you shine a torch, Just as dusk is falling, on the buds and new leaves as these beetles settle down on the rose plants at that time.

Spraying with B.H.C. wet table powder at the same strength as recommended for caterpillar will also control this pest. Hand-picking is however, the best control for a small collection.

4. Red scale: These sucking insects appear as small reddish brown spots on the branches. They can easily be controlled by manually rubbing off the scales by using an old toothbrush dipped in a solution made by adding a few drops of MALATHION or ROGOR to 1/2 cup of water.

General: Instead of waiting for either diseases or pests to appear, the simplest approach is to adopt preventive spraying against them. All that is necessary is to spray weekly or at least at 10 days intervals with DITHANE, ROGOR and B.H.C. wettable powder, all mixed together at the dosage mentioned earlier i.e. one tablespoon each of DITHANE and B.H.C. and two teaspoons of ROGOR dissolved in 5 litres of water. These three chemicals can safely be mixed in 5 litres of water adding two tablespoons of soap-powder e.g. Det or Surf to help wetting of the leaf surface. In alternative spraying ROGOR can be substituted by MALATHION at the same strength, in order to prevent development of resistant strains of pests but this is not essential if one has only a few plants. It should also be noted that spraying should be done in the early morning or late evening to avoid damage to the leaves.