

Bringing a Queen to Show, the Leavitt Elixir  
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When you talk about bringing a queen to the show most people think of a hybrid tea rose, and q' tips. Wellllll, a Queen starts when you prune your garden. At this time, its best to use Hickmans or Millers Rose food or any organic rose blend, as well as put a 5lb coffee can of horse alfalfa pellets on established bushes only, and just a handful on established mini's.

Dormant spray is an excellent idea, at the time of pruning, to help ensure those Queens. At this time, you can throw 1cup of Epsom salts per established bush and about ¼ cup or less on established mini's. READ, where it says ESTABLISHED, it means Established, not new bushes, you can cook, new bushes. Plus a good water regime.

Now the roses are leafing out, time to finger prune. With your weekly sprays regime at this time you can foliar feed with Response (according to directions) and Miracle Grow (3-4 Tablespoons per 10gallons of mix.)

Finger pruning is a way of thinning out the bush as new growth starts, when three shoots come out of a bud eye, prune out two and leave the strongest one, again we are talking about queens, if you just want a lot of flowers leave all three. Now that the bushes have leafed out, its time to spray insecticides and fungicides, even if you don't see any bugs or disease, on a weekly basis, or Banner Max, every fourteen days. If you wait till you get mildew to spray you will have the Court Jester, not the Queen. Now you are spraying weekly, and its time to feed weekly. You want to use a smorgasbord of food for your roses, switching off every week with something different. These are some examples, fish emulsion, or fish meal, blood meal, cotton seed meal, bat guano, chicken poop (DPW), Mills Magic, Magnum Grow.

Now the buds are forming and its time to do a different type of finger pruning. For that Queen, you want the strongest terminal bud only, finger, or take out the smaller side buds if there are any. For the perfect sprays, take out the terminal, or main bud, that is the strongest, but we need to get back to that Queen. Now you should also be watering about 4 times a week on a drip system, or hand watering, (if you are using the Leavitt elixir) and roses like water, as long as they have good drainage, every time you water, (and this is all year), you should be giving those babies, 5 to 6 gallons of water every time you water. Yes, 5 to 6 gallons. Remember your running for a Queen not a Jester.

Now you're getting the fever, Queen Fever. Also all along you have been playing Classical music to your roses on Sunday, and the rest of the week, you switch off from Jazz, to Rock. Sorry rockin Queens don't like Country.

Tea, for roses? Not high Tea, but good ole smelly tea about 4 weeks before the show.  
Now the Brew goes like this

32 gallon trash can  
Fill with water  
12 cups of Alfalfa horse pellets  
1 Cup of Epsom Salts  
5 or 6 Tablespoons of K-Rex Chelated Iron  
1 Cup or Two of any optional any organic fertilizer  
Let ferment with a lid for minimum of 3-4 days, maximum 2 weeks

It's Tea Time! Pour 1 gallon per ESTABLISHED Bush. Minis, half that. You can tea 3-4 times in the spring, and twice in the fall, unless you are a maniac, like VonLemens and Wilsons.

Its getting close to show time, the fever is rising, its time to use super bloom to really boost those buds to there optimum.

If the show is Saturday, best rule of thumb is to cut no earlier than Wednesday. Again, this is a rule of thumb, not always true. Refrigerate blooms, in Vita Flora. And hope you can groom. It's a Queen.

Now the biggest secret of all, is to make sure you have a whopper of a fight on the morning of or on the way to the show. That really helps those Queens.

For fall, start feeding in mid September, you may not need to spray.

Happy summer Queen and Spring District Show dreaming.