

The last rose lingers long into Fall



Ivan Krantz has over 250 plants, 131 varieties of roses at his home, with the plants adding the colors of pink, red, yellow, white, and lavender to the beauty view.

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There is a phrase signifying a position of luxury and idleness, an easy street — "He is living in a bed of roses now!" Anyone who has tended a bed of roses for as many years as Ivan Krantz has, will emphatically state that caring for roses is no easy, idle task.

This rose grower who lives in Quarryville, southern Lancaster County, has been planting and pruning these flowers for at least sixty years. Ivan was reared and later farmed on his parents' farm in Strasburg Township east of Hessdale, Pennsylvania. He lived there for a total of seventy-one years before moving into town. His wife, the late Cella Brubaker Krantz, and he worked the dairy farm with the help of their four sons and one daughter.

But it was Ivan's own interest in roses that developed into a hobby which encompassed the caring for over four-hundred rose bushes on the farm. Krantz explained the beginning of his hobby: "In the teens, 1914 to 1916, I bought my own roots and started a hobby which has been appreciated all the more now that I cannot do hard labor."

Eleven years ago Krantz moved into Quarryville and of course, he brought some of his roses with him. No longer allowed by his physician to do strenuous work such as mowing the lawn, Ivan finds his hobby of the past sixty years one which keeps him busy.

The beds of roses this eighty-two year old great-grand father tends totals 250 bushes with 131 different varieties. The beds stretch across the width of his backyard and down the two sides almost to the house. Two smaller beds

parallel the one across the back and a circular bed stands in front of these two smaller ones. The rectangular beds consist of two rows of bushes with each rose planted approximately two feet away from the next.

Despite the late October date on the calendar, the roses were in beautiful array. Vigorous, shiny leaved bushes displayed bushels and bushels of these fragrant flowers in pinks, reds, whites, yellows and even lavenders. Ivan Krantz readily shared his life long interest and knowledge of caring for these flowers with our readers.

With proper attention given them, roses will bloom in this area from about May 25 through late October or until a killing freeze. The main cause of losing rose bushes, according to this veteran grower, is starting into Winter as an unhealthy plant.

"You will always lose a few bushes each year, no matter how much you try to care for them properly, but losses can be less if you plant them right and keep them healthy," he summarized.

"When planting a new bush, choose a southern or eastern exposure where the bush will have sun at least half the day."

"Avoid a shady spot for two reasons. One, the mildew will be more of a problem when the bush is in the shade too much and, two, the tree causing the shade will rob the nutrients and moisture from the rose bush."

Krantz explained the planting procedure. "Place the roses two feet apart. Dig a hole eighteen across and deep. When planting a bare-root rose, mound dirt back into the hole and spread the roots out over the mound so that the rose will be planted at the same depth it was before being dug." "Remember that the loosened soil will settle after planting." "Once the soil settles it may have the rose planted too deep," he cautioned.

Using the soil from the hole, mix 12 quarts of peat moss and one tablespoon of 5-10-5 fertilizer with it.

After planting the rose bush so that it is no deeper than when planted before, firm the soil around the plant and fill the hole half full with the soil mixture.

Then pour in one bucket to one and a half buckets of water, to make the soil settle.

After the water has soaked in, finish filling the hole and mound the remaining planting mixture around the stalk to a depth of several inches.

Planting dormant roots or bare roots should occur in early April or late Fall for good results. Potted roses may be planted through the middle of Summer to allow time to get established before winter sets in.

Ivan Krantz prefers planting early in the Spring when he is already at work preparing his roses for the flowering seasons ahead. From the eighth to the twelfth of April, Ivan trims the dead wood out to ground level and prunes the stalks to a desired height of about three feet depending on the vigor of the particular bush. The general rule is to trim the height according to the size of the stalk.

During this same early Spring trimming, Krantz removes the Winter mulch consisting of leaves, grass clippings, and pine needles, supplied by helpful neighbors. He cultivates gently around the base of the bushes with a three-prong hook to loosen the soil. Care is taken not to disturb the roots which lie just under the ground level.

After trimming, raking and cultivating are complete, Ivan Krantz administers the first plant feeding dosage. The rate of two tablespoons of 5-10-5 or 5-10-10 fertilizer is scattered around the base of the bushes. He scatters the dry fertilizer at a distance of eight to 10 inches from the plant. A second application occurs the thirtieth of June.

Upon completion of applying the fertilizer in April, Krantz mulches the beds heavily with grass clippings. With the first cutting of lawns in May, Krantz mulches to a depth of two or more inches of clippings. As the grass mulch dries and deteriorates, it draws nitrogen from the soil thus necessitating an application of additional nitrogen the first of August. Two tablespoons per plant is the rate Krantz recommends.

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The roses bloomed into the late Autumn, some of the plants showing tremendous size and color.

HOMESTEAD NOTES



The plants are cut back to ground level if the stem dies over the Winter. New growth around the cut back stem all occurred this past Summer.