

# 7 Days and Counting....On Your Way To Winning

By: Richard Anthony & Kristine Vance

Identify potential exhibition blooms; those that are as good as you have ever grown previously. At minimum, the sepals should be split showing some degree of color. Ideally the sepals will be horizontal and dependent on weather conditions should open to exhibition stage within **three to five days** dependent on the cultivar.

Remove **ancillary** (side) buds daily unless a spray is desired. If a spray is your objective, remove the center bud and gently move the remaining buds to improve the form of the spray; a wad of aluminum foil works well to separate and position buds to improve the geometric form of the spray.

If canes are crooked or bowed, use a **bamboo or thin wooden dowel** to straighten the cane. Use at least three twist ties to fasten the cane to the bamboo/dowel and recheck every other day tightening, loosening or repositioning as necessary. Buds that lean forward may be straightened with a small bamboo or wooden dowel and twist ties but care must be exercised as the opening bud may be damaged. Don't fret if you have buds that tilt or nod forward, as these can be used as open blooms.

Spray your roses but insure to water them before hand at least twelve to twenty four hours prior to spraying and fertilizing as well. Either spray your roses very early in the morning or after seven o'clock (Spring Shows – five o'clock for Fall shows) in the evening depending on how much sun is on your roses; roses that receive afternoon shade should be time adjusted accordingly. Gently knock off excess spray with your sprayer wand especially if spraying in the morning as burning of the leaf tips and edges of the leaves may result if the excess pooled spray does not completely dry. Mist your buds with **Immunox Plus** or a comparable product; do this every day. The mist should be applied from approximately twelve inches away from the opening bloom and very lightly. Your objective is to eliminate **Botrytis** (the light browning of the edges of petals) and potential insect damage.

Water your roses lightly with approximately one quarter to one half gallon per large bush every other day; one half as much for miniatures and mini-floras; obviously, we do not water when it is raining. You may want to consider alternating watering one day and fertilizing with a water soluble fertilizer the following day (using less than half as much fertilizer as normal). If you normally use one tablespoon per gallon, a reduction to less than one half tablespoon should be satisfactory. Miniatures and mini-floras should receive half as much fertilizer as large roses. Our philosophy is half as much but twice as often when it comes to fertilizing.

Cover your opening buds and uncut blooms, prior to dusk, with a baggie or other suitable clear plastic bag. Twist ties are optional. If rain is forecast and baggies are used with a lip, the lip (we recommend Hefty Baggies in a roll that does not have a lip) they must be slit or a ruined bloom will result if a quarter inch of rain or more falls. Remove the baggies before the sun is up for any length of time or cooked blooms and/or Bonnie Botrytis may result.

Check your roses in the morning and also during the early evening hours for potential queens and also to correct any problems that may arise. Walking your rose beds will provide a dearth of information if you are observant and pay attention to each individual cultivar; they all have unique characteristics which take some amount of time to discern.

Cut your blooms when ready as opposed to what you may have learned. The best times to cut roses is very early in the morning or just prior to darkness as roses will be more completely hydrated at this time of the day. Mother Nature dictates cutting your potential queens when ready as we cut many queens during the heat of the day. After cutting your roses, place the cane in a container of tepid or slightly warmer water (80 to 85 degrees) for about one hour and store them in a dark or shaded area. After the roses are fully hydrated, clean the leaves, trim leaves and sepals and use a few Q-tips to position petals if desired or as necessary. Remember you can **remove** anything from the rose and leaves but you cannot add anything to either.

Transfer the cleaned and prepped rose to another storage container. Add lemon juice or a citric soda to the water unless you have a **Chrysal** preservative product. **Chrysal** should only be used when storing your roses under refrigerated temperatures. The leaves should not be immersed in the water during the final storage. Consideration should be given to using something to separate your roses; plastic sleeves, old x-ray film, freezer paper and plastic wrap all work to some degree.

If you are storing your blooms in the basement you should safely be able to do so for two and sometimes three days without negative consequences. We recommend using a dehumidifier and adding ice cubes to the container of un-refrigerated roses once or twice a day; this just may extend the life of the rose. If you are keeping the roses in a refrigerator you will need to cover the bloom with a baggy and secure it with a twist tie unless it is an old non frost free model; miniatures and mini-floras may be placed in large plastic cups and then placed inside a plastic grocery bag tying the top of the bag securely. Miniatures, if cut tight, will last approximately four to five days in cold storage.

Check your grooming kit and obtain supplies as needed; pens with blue or black ink, Q-tips, rubber bands and other items normally used at the rose show. You do not want to find out that you are missing something at the show. Many exhibitors have a supply check list that they review the week of the show and also tic off as they determine they have an adequate supply on hand.

Complete the entry tags or as much as possible (if we have several of the same variety and do not know how we are going to use the variety we just fill out the tag without the **Class**

**and Section)** to include your name and address, cultivar name, class and section number the evening before the rose show and do a final check of your supplies.

Good Luck. Remember all it takes is one rose to win.

As always, if you have questions about this or other articles that we have written, please direct them to Richard at [RJA4CPA@aol.com](mailto:RJA4CPA@aol.com) or Kristine at [Beancnr30@wideopenwest.com](mailto:Beancnr30@wideopenwest.com)