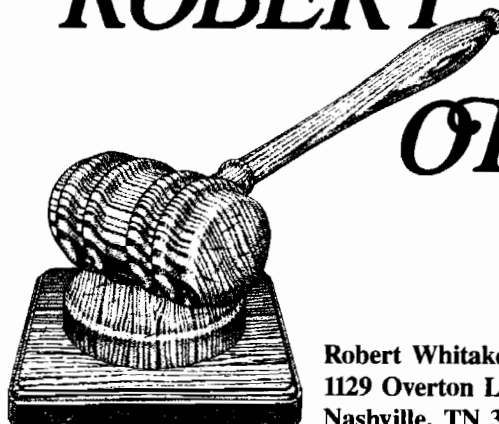




ROBERT'S RULES OF ROSES



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ROSE TERMS

Those of us who have grown roses for years use a number of expressions to describe certain aspects of rose growing that to a new rose enthusiast appear to be a foreign language. Let's take a trip through this territory and see how this jargon sounds to others' ears and do a little educating in the process.

CROWN GALL: Those who have been listening to the press lately might think we are talking about Lady Diana's dressing down Prince Charles in public. No! This isn't it a'tall.

This is a very large, brown and warty growth appearing at the base of a stem, on the root system, or above the graft which, left unchecked, can girdle the plant. Infection is thought to enter through wounds or bruises occurring on the plant which allow the growth to feed on the plant. Removal of the growth, disinfection and resetting of the plant in new soil can salvage a plant in some circumstances. Cutting away all injured roots and protecting damaged bark before planting can lessen chances of infection.

OVERDRESSED: Now, some may think we are referring to our President, Don Ballin, appearing in a tuxedo at the final banquet of an ARS Convention. Guess again!

This is a term given to the practice of artificially rearranging the petals of an exhibition rose to create a more symmetrical but unnatural outline. The Gulf District might even describe it as a Buddy Harrelson run amuck. Actually, Buddy claims he can turn *Betsy Ross* into *Elizabeth Taylor* using his grooming prowess — talking about roses only.

BUD UNION: Some might think this is an association of actors who do beer commercials on T.V. Not so, bated breath.

This is the point on a rose plant (produced by the grafting technique) where the bud and the rootstock are united — where the "rubber meets the road."

SUCKER: I have been called this for buying packaged roses at K-Mart in July, expecting them to bloom and be true to name, but this lollipop knows better.

On grafted plants with aggressive rootstocks, new shoots will sprout from the root system and weaken the budded portion by their excessive vigor. Early detection and removal is important. This does not mean removing new growths originating at the bud union (remember, you learned that term above) which are

the natural replacement canes you are seeking for the budded portion. Its point of origination is the clue, and the rose term is **BASAL BREAK**.

CONFUSED CENTER: This is really not talking about Harold Goldstein's trying to set up Christmas in Roseland in October for an ARS Convention special exhibit.

This is a condition appearing in the center of an exhibition bloom where the petals are disarranged or split, giving the specimen an asymmetrical appearance. Some judges have been known to start frothing at the mouth at the sight of one.

CALLUS: Some hyperactive exhibitors have called me this when I failed to put the blue ribbon on their entry in a challenge class — they were the ones who were foaming at the mouth that time!

In rosedom, this is the scar tissue that forms over a pruning cut or at the base of a cutting one might be rooting. When the cut forms this callus, new roots will emerge to sustain growth as occurs on a new seedling.

GUARD PETALS: This is not the San Quentin Prison for rogue rose plants — the Dr. Huey and Mr. Hyde syndrome.

It is a term for the outermost ring of petals on an individual flower which has to take all the spray material attacks and insect bites as the blossom opens. They have been known to have a mean streak in them — usually green or white! For this reason, exhibitors have a practice of removing them in pairs to improve their displays.

DEAD HEADING: Some of our new members may have attributed this expression to the first speakers at a rose seminar to resume the program after the luncheon break. Not true, bread basket.

All recurrent blooming rose types require the removal of spent blooms to encourage the next cycle of bloom on the plant. Most cultivars will lapse into dormancy if allowed to set seed. Heavy cutting back on the new canes or laterals promotes larger flowers but delayed bloom. Lighter cut-back promotes more flowers of smaller size and quicker repeat of the bloom cycle. New plants should have flowers removed with only a limited amount of stems attached to conserve strength. The option is yours to exercise. Floribundas in particular could never live up to their name if heavily cut back after each bloom period.

CROCK: Some exhibitors claim this is the most correct term

to describe the story told where the same *Uncle Joe* specimen was used in two consecutive weekend rose shows to win Queen of Show each time. To settle the argument over whether to call the cultivar 'Toro' or *Uncle Joe* we may have to compromise on 'Father Time.'

Actually, this is an English term for the broken pieces of clay pottery used in the container bottoms of potted roses to enhance good drainage and retain the potting mixture. Rose gardeners can enjoy early bloom by potting up rose plants early in the year and allowing them to grow and bloom in a greenhouse or simply-constructed cold frame. The quality of bloom can exceed the first bloom on outdoor plants and late spring freezes cannot damage these plants. The English have been doing this for years with their short growing season, so what's holding you back?

So many of the rose terms we use to describe the activities of our common hobby flow from our lips so easily we tend to forget how they might be interpreted by the general public. These are but a few examples to illustrate our dilemma.

SUMMARY: At a most recent meeting of the Nashville Rose Society, one of our newer members asked to see just where the bud eye was on the plant which the speaker had referred to in his pruning talk. The demonstration plant was taken out into the audience so all could see just what this bud eye was that

we were constantly talking about. All of us who try to help new rose growers enjoy their hobby in a more knowledgeable way must be aware of our unique phraseology and the terms we use to avoid speaking in a foreign tongue. Pardon me while I go out and help one of our amateur hybridizers with his "emasculatation."