



## **WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY ROSES DURING THE VIRUS EPIDEMIC?**

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The short answer is “Everything you did before.” The difference is now you have time to do it. Water bushes to maintain turgidity, and feed with good fertilizers, whether manufactured or “natural”. Since they have just bloomed and you have cut away the spent blooms, replenish the nutrients and moisture lost in that cutback.

Now is a great time to rework the soil in beds. Some of us remove aged soil and replace it with new. What better soil than Nature’s Way Resources own “Rose Soil”? Refurbishment is not complete without adding mulch. A 2" deep layer will keep the beds cooler, hold in moisture needed in summer’s heat, and make weeds easy to extract.



I recently removed the landscape timbers bordering two rose beds, took out some bushes, reworked their holes (as above), and put new bushes. Since the grooming took away the spent blooms, the bushes are ready to put out new growth. Now is a good time to “molest” the bushes, while the temporary break in their growth is caused by the grooming.

Consider adding an irrigation system for your garden and, perhaps, lawn. Large, well-grown Hybrid Tea roses need about an inch of water a week in the heat of summer months. Note: Many irrigation systems have controller boxes meant to be installed inside (garages, sheds, or utility rooms). For a little more money you can buy controls that can be mounted outside (in the rain).

Most irrigation water is delivered through underground piping and solenoid valves. Be aware wiring is cheap and easy to install. Use in-house telephone wire, the kind that is run around the baseboards (100-foot Southwire CAT 5E 4-wire cable); costs about \$25. There is no need to buy expensive special “moisture-proof” cables that have extra thick insulation. The 4-wires allow signals to 3 solenoid valves (with one wire being used as a “common”.) Solenoid valves cost about \$20 each, and are easily mounted underground in a 10-inch wide plastic box that costs about \$13. Connections are easily made by using 3-M UR squeeze-on connectors that cost about \$15 for a 100-count box.

Keep ‘em watered and disease free, and cut the spent blooms after they begin to deteriorate, and your roses will give you marvelous color from April through November.

*More details are available from the Houston Rose Society [houstonrose.org](http://houstonrose.org)*