

Magical Microbe Remedy  
By Frank Polk, Consulting Rosarian, ARF Board Member

Why didn't someone tell me this before? That's what I hope readers feel after reading about my experience with Microbe Remedy, a product I purchased from the ARF country store at a discount that fully covered the cost of my ARF membership.

Would you like to "exaggerate" your rose bushes? Grow them larger? Increase the number of blooms? Increase the number of basal breaks? Would you like to intensify the colors of your blooms? Would you like to improve the lushness of your foliage? Rejuvenate some really old bushes?

If so, I recommend you try Microbe Remedy. It will do ALL of the above. But it does not work overnight. It may take well over a month before you see any sign of improvement. But after using it for 2 years, I found it to be a game-changer!

I am not a scientist who can explain how the microbe powder works. What the product does, according to its package, is "enhance nutrient availability" and "root growth." In short, it makes your bushes more efficient in absorbing the nutrients in the soil, nutrients you have already placed there. So, it is NOT a fertilizer. Rather, it makes the fertilizer really work. In fact, it may allow you to use less fertilizer while getting better results.

For years my standard fertilizer program was the rather basic "one cup" plan: I would put down one cup of Osmocote per bush after spring pruning and then one cup of Mills Magic (not the 2-3 cups suggested on the bag) in the middle of April, June, and August of each season. When I became an ARF board member, I thought I needed to up my game to get better roses. So, I supplemented my fertilizer program with a tonic. For each of the 85 roses in my garden, I mixed SuperThrive, kelp, humic acid, Peters 20-20-20, iron chelates, and Epsom salts in a bucket of water and applied this concoction to each bush. It was time-consuming and back-breaking. And I did it 3 times a year. For 85 bushes.

No more! I no longer mix and apply any tonic. Instead, I use Microbe Remedy to make my bushes efficiently absorb the nutrients from my simple "one cup" plan.

Microbe Remedy is very simple to use. In an Ortho hose-end sprayer that holds a quart of liquid, I place 2 tablespoons of the powder and add water up to the top level. I set the distribution dial on the sprayer at 1 tablespoon. Then I attach the sprayer to a hose and the fun begins. Standing upright and over each bush, I douse the bush for 10 to 15 seconds. (Those who know about blackspot will do this in the morning.) You should be able to cover 60 bushes or so with one application. While I make 4 applications each season (May, June, July, and August), the cost savings are enormous when compared to the cost of my tonic.

So, now I do less work, spend less money, and get better roses. Why didn't someone tell me about this before?