

# Rosarian Ramblings

## ALFALFA TEA AND SIMILAR DELIGHTS

**COW TEA, ALFALFA TEA and FISH EMULSION** solutions still work the best with roses of all types, including miniatures. These mixtures feed the soil, supporting the organisms that convert nutrients into forms available to plants. A long chain but a simple one. Food value is built in as well, but the primary boost comes from activating the soil organisms. Can't burn . . . tiny hair roots love it. If you haven't brewed up one of the Rambler's teas, your roses haven't enjoyed a natural treat.

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- 32 gallon, leak-proof, plastic garbage can with a **TIGHT** lid
- Alfalfa meal or alfalfa pellets (about 12 cups per barrel)
- OR a 10-pound onion sack of cow chips or horse apples (or sack of manure)
- Available water . . . long stirring stick (broom handle)

### FERMENTING METHOD:

Add the active ingredients to garbage can, fill nearly to the top with water and stir. **COVER TIGHTLY.** Let steep for 2-3 days, stir again. Re-cover. Stir and steep off-and-on for no more than a week. The result will be a green fermented solution with a foamy consistency. It's ready to apply. It also smells.

### APPLICATION:

Use an old bucket to bail out a gallon or so per large bush. Miniatures can use about half as much. Can safely be used every six weeks during the active growing season. Works great on all sorts of plants in containers. Leaves green up, new growth appears, blooms take on a richer hue. When the garbage can is nearly empty, there will be a rich sediment left. Fill with water, steep a day or so and apply again. One loading of organic ingredients will make up two batches.

### WHAT HAPPENS?

Alfalfa contains a growth hormone called Triaccontanol and is an organic base on which organisms can feed. Alfalfa meal or pellets broadcast and scratched into the soil do the same thing, but tea works much faster.

### FORTIFIED TEA:

To the finished tea, add 8 Tablespoons of chelated iron (Sprint), 1/2 cup of Epsom Salts, and 1 cup of 20-20-20 soluble fertilizer (or a 20-20-20 mix with trace elements). Stir well. Apply one gallon per established plant, but only about a quart for miniatures. It's the best treat your roses have ever had.



Howard Walters