

Rose Rosette Disease Has Been Discovered in Kern County and we need your help!

Rose rosette disease (RRD) is a destructive disease of roses caused by a recently identified virus. The virus is transmitted by a very small (microscopic) eriophyid mite. RRD is always fatal to a rose plant, although the length of time to kill the plant varies up to perhaps three or four years. RRD has been a major problem in some eastern U.S. states but not in California. Identification and removal of infected plants can safeguard other roses in the landscape, as well as protecting Kern's rose plant crop.

Please be on the lookout in rose plants in your landscape or that you see in public parks or commercial plantings for the early RRD symptom of excessive thorniness (two photos to the right), multiple terminal shoots (called witch's broom), and in a very late stage, the bright red of terminal foliage. I have posted three papers to our UCCE Kern County website (cekern.ucanr.edu) under the heading "Environmental Horticulture/ Environmental Science" that give further information and contain additional photos. These include an Extension publication from Texas A&M, an article from American Rose magazine, as well as an article from HortScience. Conditions in Kern will affect the spread and development of the disease, so our experience may not be the same as has occurred back east.



If you see such a plant, please note its specific location (address, placement on the property), and contact John Karlik of UC Cooperative Extension, 868-6220, or

jfkarlik@ucanr.edu. A photo would also be helpful. He will arrange for sample submission to test for the rose rosette virus and check for the presence of the vector.

Please note that damage to rose plants from glyphosate (Roundup™) (photo at right) has a limited resemblance to RRD. However, glyphosate damage does not produce excessive thorniness. Also, rose terminals affected by glyphosate are needle-like and do not appear as a witch's broom.



John Karlik

*Environmental Horticulture/
Environmental Science*

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