

# Tea Time for Roses

By Jolene Adams

There are many different ingredients available for making 'tea' for roses. These teas are a dilute liquid 'pick me up' that will perk up your roses at any time – and feed the soil as well!

Basic instructions:

1. You will need a container large enough to make the tea. I use a 20-gallon trash can. You can also use a 5-gallon bucket or whatever you have handy. The container needs a lid (this stuff doesn't smell too good!). You will use 1 gallon of liquid per rose bush. Only a half-gallon for miniatures.
2. You will need something to stir with. I use a broom handle.
3. You need the dry materials such as alfalfa, manure, compost, coffee grounds, etc.

Alfalfa tea is a great spring tonic that roses really love. Alfalfa tea releases a growth hormone that makes everything work better. Just add 2 cups of alfalfa meal or pellets for every 5 gallons of water, add water, stir, and then steep for four or five days, stirring occasionally. You may 'fortify' the mixture once a year with 1 fistful of Epsom salts for every 5 gallons of water.

The tea will start to smell in about three days. Keep the lid ON. Stir, dip out and use about a gallon of mix on large rose bushes, 1/2 that much on minis. Be sure to water well before and after.

When you get to the bottom of the container, add water to the sludge to fill it up again! One load of meal or pellets will brew up two containers full, but add more fortifiers for the second time around.

You'll see greener growth and stronger stems within a week.

For other teas – use this same recipe – but add manures, or the coffee grounds (from Starbucks or Peets), or compost (either home made or store bought). Fortifiers can be Mills Magic Mix or Dr. Earth rose food, one tablespoon of Miracle Grow per 5 gallons of water, or a squirt of liquid rose food.