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Over the years, thousands of rose growers have suffered serious skin damage after spending thousands of hours in the sun with little or no skin protection.

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States.

Consider these important facts:

- According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.
- More than two people die of skin cancer in the U.S. every hour while more than 9,500 people are diagnosed with skin cancer every day.
- More people are diagnosed with skin cancer each year in the U.S. than all other cancers combined.
- More than 5,400 people worldwide die of non-melanoma skin cancer every month.
- An estimated 197,700 cases of melanoma will be diagnosed in the U.S. in 2022. An estimated 7,650 people will die of melanoma in 2022.
- On average, a person's risk for melanoma doubles if they have had more than five sunburns. Just one blistering sunburn in childhood or adolescence more than doubles a person's chances of developing melanoma later in life.
- Regular outdoor use of an SPF 30 or higher sunscreen reduces the risk of developing melanoma by 50 percent.
- People who use sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher daily show 24 percent less skin aging than those who do not use sunscreen daily.
- An estimated 90 percent of skin aging is caused by the sun.
- Sun damage is cumulative. Only about 23 percent of lifetime exposure occurs by the age of 18.
- All skin cancers – basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma – are caused by exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

The more years you are involved in gardening, the greater the risk of skin cancer if you don't utilize adequate protection against the sun's rays.

Sun Protection Plan

Apply a broad spectrum (UVA and UVB) sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher before going outdoors on all areas of exposed skin, including the top of hands. Unprotected skin can be damaged by the sun's UV rays in as little as 15 minutes.

There are many different types of rays present in sunlight. The rays that are most damaging to our skin are ultraviolet (UV) rays. There are two basic types of ultraviolet rays that reach the earth's surface — UVB and UVA.

UVB rays are responsible for producing sunburn. The UVB rays also play the greatest role in causing skin cancers, including the deadly black mole form of skin cancer (malignant melanoma).

UVA rays also play a role in skin cancer formation. In addition, the UVA rays penetrate more deeply into the skin and play a greater role in premature skin aging changes including wrinkle formation,

There are approximately 500 times more UVA rays in sunlight than UVB rays. Therefore, in addition to protecting your skin from the effects of UVB rays, it is also very important to protect from the damaging effects of the more numerous UVA rays.

Wear a wide-brimmed "bucket hat" with an ultraviolet protection factor rating of 50 to shade the face, head, ears and neck.

Wear sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays as possible.

Advice From Specialist

Dr. Susan Chon is a professor of dermatology and director of the Skin Cancer Screening and Education Program at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Tex.

MD Anderson is one of the top medical facilities in the world in dealing with cancer. Dr. Chon explains how rose growers can protect themselves from the sun

"We try to impress on gardeners to minimize the sun exposure on the most sensitive areas such as the face, arms, hands, ears and neck," said Dr. Chon.

"Zinc oxide based sun screen is excellent. It doesn't sting, and there are no fumes because it is not a chemical. It is water resistant and stays in place easily. If people can put this on their face, ears, neck as well as their arms and front and back of hands, it will help tremendously. Members of the Professional Golfers Association have found this useful.

"Use UPF 50 clothing and hats if possible. In golf, players have been using *Solar Sleeves* when they practice. It essentially is thin, stretchable UPF 50 rated material that covers open arms all the way from the

wrist to the mid to upper arm. You can get them in any color. Golfers wear their regular golf shirt and then put on *Solar Sleeves* for sun protection. When they are finished with their round of golf, they walk off the course and pull off their *Solar Sleeves*. Unlike sunscreen, there is no mess, no grease or tacky feeling on the skin. Some golfers and caddies really like it. There are golfers who feel quite comfortable with them over their arms because their skin doesn't burn. This material blocks the sun the entire time they are out golfing. It definitely offers sun protection that doesn't sweat off. Gardeners can easily use these sleeves which offers sun protection when they are in the sun."

She said you can find them at www.amazon.com

Dr. Chon was asked what is worse on the skin for gardeners. Is it being in 100-plus degree sun or in San Diego at 65 degrees on the beach?

"The ultraviolet index is important to consider. Arizona, Texas and San Diego are pretty much on the same latitude. The temperature is misleading. While you will feel more comfortable when it is 65 degrees, you will feel like staying outside longer. If anything, the heat luckily pushes people indoors more. They end up getting less sun. The UV index depends on cloud coverage, latitude and other factors. It is much worse in Houston than it is in Seattle. For people in Texas, I recommend skin protection year-round because it is always sunny here."

Dr. Chon also addressed the sensitive areas of lips which tend to burn easily.

"There is zinc lip balm which is excellent. If a person has some zinc sunscreen, they can put a little bit on the edge of their lips. The bottom of the lips are like a landing pad for UV light."

She also explained what sun damage can do to your eyes and delicate skin next to the eyes.

"UV rays damage the lens of your eyes which leads to cataracts. This type of eye damage is normal for most people when they age. Sunglasses are important to use for this reason.

"Sunglasses are big in professional golf. The name a lot of pro golfers utilize is called *Maui Jim* which has a lot of lens colors which cuts the green and allows you to see balls better. Plus, they are light weight. The *Maui Jims* are also polarized. They are excellent for outdoor activity."

Dr. Chon was asked if she recommends any name brands which make high quality bucket hats or even larger hats that have a material rating of UPF 50 or higher that can protect the neck and heads or rose growers from the sun?

"I recommend the Coolibar brand for hats. Solumbra hats and clothes are outstanding as well.

"I also recommend that people get a hat with a brim. If you get a wide-brimmed hat with a UPF 50 or higher rating, that offers very good protection. Coolibar has many different types of hats for fishing and boating that are wide-brimmed. Coolibar has a whole line of high-quality hats with flaps that cover the back of your neck."

Go on the internet to: www.coolibar.com