



Rose Care

Planting

When to plant: Bare-root roses should be planted only in the early spring. Container grown roses may be planted in the spring or fall.

Planting site: Roses must have at least six hours of direct sun daily. They require a well-drained soil with a pH of 5.5 to 6.5 and prefer soils with plenty of organic matter. Unless the soil is heavily compacted, do not add amendments. If necessary, add no more than one-third by volume compost into the planting hole. Mix to a depth of about 10 to 12 inches, then let the soil settle before planting. If the soil pH is less than 5.5, add powdered limestone to correct the acidity.

Contact Cooperative Extension for information on soil testing.

Plant Spacing: Space tea and shrub roses two and one-half feet to three and one-half feet apart, depending on the size of the plant. Space hybrid perpetuals three to five feet apart, and climbers eight to ten feet apart.



Planting Technique:

Bare Root: If the roots of bare root roses seem dry, soak them in water over night or cover the roots with moist soil until ready to plant. Dig a hole 18 inches deep and 18 inches wide for each plant. Form a cone-shaped mound of soil in the center of the planting hole, spread the roots uniformly over the cone and backfill so that no air pockets exist. The swollen graft union on the trunk should be at or slightly below ground level.

Container Grown: Slit and remove the container and spread the roots out as described above before filling the hole. Prune broken roots and cut canes to remove all dead wood. Mound, mulch and water as described above.

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Mulch: Use a two inch layer of mulch, such as wood chips, shredded bark, pine needles or oak leaves to prevent weeds and conserve moisture.

Water: For optimum growth, roses require one to two inches of water a week. Supplement rain with water as needed. Water early in the day, avoid wetting leaves and flowers; moisture on above-ground parts overnight promotes diseases such as blackspot, powdery mildew and botrytis.

Fertilization: Roses grow best in nutrient-rich soils. Test your soil and apply fertilizers accordingly. Follow label directions for fertilizer application; apply in two parts – half after spring pruning, and half after first bloom. After each application the fertilizer must be watered-in well. For less labor intensive fertilization, use of a water soluble product as outlined on the label is satisfactory.

Cutting: The first season new bushes are planted, it is best to cut flowers only to remove faded blooms, leaving as many stems and leaves as possible to nourish the plant. Try to cut blooms at or below the first five-leaflet leaves. Removal of faded blooms is essential to future production of flowers.

Disease Prevention: Fungi, especially blackspot and powdery mildew, are prevalent in our area. Proper air circulation and use of disease resistant varieties will reduce the need for regular spraying. When necessary you may apply a fungicide as dictated by label instructions. Low impact alternative fungicides are available. Contact the Cornell Cooperative Extension diagnostic lab for management of specific problems. To minimize “leaf burn,” do not spray if daytime temperatures exceed 80-85 degrees F or the plant is drought stressed.

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Insects: Spraying with insecticides to manage pests is not recommended unless observed damage is intolerable; such spraying eliminates beneficial insects as well as the pests. Beetles may be hand-picked, and mites and aphids may be washed off with a directed stream of water. (The stream of water should be strong but not so forceful that it damages the plants.) For help on the management of other rose insect problems, contact Cornell Cooperative Extension's diagnostic lab.

Pruning:

Hybrid Teas and Grandifloras: In our area, pruning of these popular types is done in early spring as the forsythia begins to flower. Pruning is done to shape the bush, to remove winter-killed and diseased canes, to thin out the bush to improve air circulation and to promote new growth. The height to which the bush is cut depends on the extent of winter-kill and on personal choice. It is generally acknowledged that the lower the cut, the larger the blooms. In general, leave four or five major canes, removing other older canes. Pruning techniques are clearly illustrated in many inexpensive books on rose culture.

Floribundas: The general rule for removing winter-killed and diseased cane applies. However, since these plants produce large numbers of flowers, they should not be pruned as severely as hybrid teas. Leave substantially more canes.

Climbers: All winter-killed canes must be removed. Each year it is good practice to cut an old cane or two to ground level to permit the development of new canes. Cut the ends of the established canes back to where they are about the thickness of a pencil. If canes are forced to grow along a horizontal plane (by tying if necessary) flowering will occur along the entire length of the cane as opposed to simply at the ends of the cane.

Shrubs and Old Garden Roses: Pruning of these varies widely. Old garden roses, most of which bloom only in the spring, should be pruned after flowering. They may be pruned to control size, to thin out plants, and to remove dead and diseased wood. Modern shrubs may be pruned in early spring and are not normally pruned as severely as hybrid teas and floribundas. Dead wood is removed and the bush is further shaped to control size. Thinning out to remove spindly growth will promote proper growth of the remainder of the bush.

Winter Protection: In the fall, after heavy frost has occurred, place a hill of soil or mulch over the crown of the plant to a height of 10 to 12 inches. This will protect the graft union and crowns from drying out during winter. Do not take this soil from the area immediately around the base of the plant. Wash the soil off in spring when it is time to prune. You may also cut tall plants to a height of five feet or so once a heavy frost has taken place to minimize damage from winter winds and ice.



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The information on pest management for New York State contained in this publication is dated December 2010. The user is responsible for obtaining the most up-to-date pest management information. Contact any Cornell Cooperative Extension county office or PMEP (<http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/>), the Cornell Cooperative Extension pesticide information website. The information herein is no substitute for pesticide labeling. The user is solely responsible for reading and following manufacturer's labeling and instructions.