

Growing Healthy Roses

PREPARATION

Before you plant your rose, make sure to water it well and use a transplanter fertilizer 5-15-5. This will stimulate root growth and reduce transplant shock.

CONTAINER GROWN ROSES

When planting container grown roses, always remove the pot, even the fibre type. Try to minimize root disturbance as much as possible. Cut away the bottom of the pot, then cut the pot vertically down one side. Holding the pot, place the plant at the correct depth in the planting hole, fill the hole in on one side and then "peel off" the pot.

PACKAGED ROSES

These roses arrive at GARDENWORKS in February, and are packed in peat or sawdust to keep the roots moist. Before planting you need to fully rehydrate the roots, so they should be soaked in water overnight.

SPACING

Bush rose such as hybrid teas, grandifloras and floribundas should be spaced 50 to 75cm (20" to 30") apart, depending on the vigour of the cultivar selected.

Shrub roses need 1 to 2.5m (3' to 8') of space, or just plant them as solitary specimens.

Miniature roses can be closer at 30cm (1') apart.

Climbing roses should be spaced 1.5 to 4m (3' to 13'), depending on desired effect.

In all cases, bushes should be planted 45cm (18") away from the edge of the bed, so as to not spill out over the path/sidewalk/lawn. This often means preparing a bed twice the diameter when planting within a lawn.

PLANTING ROSES INTO A CONTAINER

The minimum container size to grow a rose is 60cm (2') wide and 45cm (18") deep. Anything smaller and you will run into trouble. Fill the pot with a mix of 50% planter box mix and 50% composted manure or sea soil, and don't forget a handful of bonemeal.

PLANTING ROSES INTO THE GROUND

Make sure your location has at least six or more hours of sunlight and that you have adequate space to allow for air circulation and free root growth. Roses are very heavy feeders so start things off right and make sure you have a rich organic soil. When planting in an established garden dig the hole approximately 25cm (10") deep and replenish the soil with a mix of 1/3 peat moss, 1/3 top soil, and 1/3 composted manure or sea soil. Add a couple handfuls of bonemeal to the planting hole, as this will slowly feed the roots for the next year.

Put enough of the soil mixture in the hole so the bud union is approximately 5cm (2") inches above soil level, this allows sunlight to warm the bud union stimulating new basal breaks. The execution is if you live in a growing zone lower than 6, plant the bud union below the soil level to protect it from cold. Continue to fill the hole water it well. The soil level will usually sink with the first watering and you may need to add more soil. It's always a great idea to water with transplanter fertilizer at this time. Now just make sure that your roses do not dry out in this first year, dehydration can kill a new rose planting.

TIPS

WATER WISELY: Water roses deeply and for long intervals. Arrange a soaker hose on the ground, or pour water from a watering can at ground level. To prevent the spread of fungal diseases, avoid water splashing onto the leaves. Water in the morning so the plant has all day to dry off before night falls.

WEED: Weed around your roses and keep the area around them clear. Roses do not tolerate heavy competition for light or food. Remove any weeds in the surrounding root area and maintain a good mulch. Just be careful you don't damage surface roots, as it encourages unwanted sucker growth.

DEADHEAD: Deadheading is the removal of spent flowers. It encourages the rose to flower more, ensuring a continuous supply of bloom. Cut just above an outward facing, 5-leaflet leaf, on a cane strong enough to support a new bloom. This is where the best flowers will come from. Cutting too close to the spent bloom, where leaves of only 3 leaflets can be found, will result in weak growth and small flowers.

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EARLY SPRING

In March when the yellow blooms of the Forsythia bush appear, it's time to prune your roses. Hard pruning is recommended except for climbers and old garden roses. Start by cutting out all dead and diseased wood. Then remove spindly shoots by cutting them out at the base of the bud union. Remove the oldest canes right down to the base of the bud union. Ideally roses should have three major canes left after pruning, but a healthy rose will survive if only one cane is left. Now shorten the canes, pruning as low as 15cm (6") is encouraged. Hard pruning stimulates new basal breaks.

Cut about 6mm (¼") above a healthy outward facing node on an angle. After pruning, sprinkle 1 cup of alfalfa and 2 Tbsp of magnesium sulphate (epsom salts) around the bush. The alfalfa will stimulate root growth and the magnesium will stimulate chlorophyll production for healthy foliage.

MID SPRING

Once the rose bush has leafed out it is time to apply fertilizer. Look for a specially formulated rose food. Preferably a slow release formula such as the GARDENWORKS brand.

FIRST CYCLE OF BLOOM

Now is the time for a high phosphorous fertilizer to promote blooming. Sprinkle granular rose food around the bush. Or if you prefer a water soluble 15-30-15 works great on roses and companion plantings. Fish fertilizer and MorBloom are another great option and can be used together. Feed every 3-4 weeks until the end of July. This is also a great time to increase air circulation by removing the bottom foot of foliage off your bushes. Doing this helps to reduce fungal infections such as black spot and rust. Continue to water well, pick off any unhealthy leaves, and deadhead on a regular basis to encourage repeat blooming.

AUGUST

It's time to stop fertilizing so your roses can start hardening off for the winter. Another application of alfalfa and magnesium can be applied, using the same recipe of 1C alfalfa and 2T of magnesium sulphate. This time allow the alfalfa-magnesium mix to steep for a few days in 2 Gal of water (per bush) then water in around the drip line. Continue to water your roses deeply.

OCTOBER

Time to stop cutting off blooms and let the bush form hips. This will help the plant as it hardens off for the winter.

NOVEMBER

After a couple of heavy frosts it's time to strip off the leaves, don't forget your ramblers and climbers. Gently grab the the branch and pull it toward you, then with downward motions remove all the leaves and throw in the garbage. Do not add them to your compost as you need to get rid of any overwintering disease and pests. Raking the area to remove any fallen leaves. You may wish to apply some dolomite lime at this time to raise the soil pH. Mulch the garden with compost or bark mulch, to insulate the soil and as a layer of protection from disease spores splashing up. Finally, apply dormant oil and lime sulphur to the roses on a sunny dry day. In climate colder than Zone 7 make sure the rose bud union is covered by mulch.

COMMON ISSUES AND CURES

Before panicking and reaching for the sprayer, learn the life cycle of the pest or disease by talking with our garden experts, then you can take the appropriate and effective action. Prevention is the best cure, so sanitation and healthy roses are the key to success. Try attracting beneficial insects to your garden by planting alyssum, marigolds, white cosmos, dill, and other herbs.

Most nutrient deficiencies can be cured by feeding your roses with a well balanced fertilizer designed specifically for roses. When adding fertilizer to your roses be sure to carefully follow the directions on the box or bag.

IRON DEFICIENCY: Leaves are marked by large yellow areas, and young leaves are almost entirely yellow. The cure is to avoid over-watering and apply iron chelate.

NITROGEN DEFICIENCY: Young leaves are small and pale. Red spots may also develop followed by early leaf drop in fall. The cure is to add a specially formulated rose food.

PHOSPHATE DEFICIENCY: Young leaves are small, and dark green with purplish tints on the underside. Stems are often stunted and weak. The cure is to add a specially formulated rose food.

POTASSIUM DEFICIENCY: Young leaves are reddish, while mature leaves are green with dried margins. The cure is to add a specially formulated rose food.

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