

Rose Care 101

Roses are historically one of the most beloved garden flowers, with countless species and cultivars available. With all the choices, its no wonder that confusion often surrounds rose care. This list of basic information should help take some of the mystery out of caring for these beauties.

- Proper Siting and planting** Roses thrive in sunny locations with good air flow and well-drained, high-organic soil. Full sun locations, which help keep leaves dry and reduces potential fungal issues, are the best, followed by morning locations.

Plant roughly 24"-30" apart to ensure good air circulation. When planting make sure any bareroot stock has been soaked in water to re-hydrate roots. Remove any damaged or diseased roots and look for Botrytis, a common root mold that can develop. You can treat roots with the fungicide Daconil added to the soaking water.

In the center of the hole you have dug, make sure there is a cone-shaped mound over which to arrange the roots- spread them out over the mound for support. The rose should be planted so the grafting union is below the surface by at least 1.5" for winter protection.

With bare-root roses, you may also want to mound up soil or sphagnum moss around the plant to about 8"-10", to "sweat" the plant. This will protect new tender canes and encourage maximum bud-break. Remove after no more than 3 weeks. Potted roses just need to be planted at the depth to the pot and do not require sweating.
- Water, Mulch and Fertilization** As with most landscape plants, roses require app. 1" of water a week and appreciate mulch to maintain moisture and protect the plant crown. Fertilizing is important with roses as they are heavy feeders- it takes alot to produce all those blooms!

Roses grow best in a pH range of 5.5-7.0. Our soils tend to need the pH lowered- so incorporate sulfur prills into the soil. Otherwise, check out the many foliar feeding products at your local garden center. Additionally, roses appreciate amended soil with organic matter to add nutrients, and improve drainage and structure.

Fertilize with a 5-10-5 fertilizer at the appropriate rate in three applications- the 1st in late April, the 2nd in early June and the 3rd in July. Do not fertilize after August 15th, as this will push late season growth which can be easily damaged by early frosts.

- Deadheading and Pruning** Removing spent blooms is important maintenance practice for roses, especially continuous bloomers. This allows the plant to conserve energy, encourages repeat blooming and removes potential disease harboring sites. To dead-head, remove the flower by cutting at a 45° angle to the first outward facing bud of a 5-leaflet leaf. If you have Rugosa roses you may opt out of deadheading as the rose hips provide seasonal interest. For Pruning guidelines, see our Rose Pruning Info sheet.
- Winter Protection** Minimal protection is to tie canes together, and mound soil 8"-10" around the crown and canes. Do this after the first killing frost, but before a hard freeze. For tall canes, you can reduce heights to 30" and tie together. Cover the mounded soil with leaf mulch, boughs or straw. We do not recommend rose cones as they provide too much insulation, causing heat build up and lack of airflow. Climbers should be removed if possible, from support structures, laid on the ground and covered with soil and boughs or straw. In mid-March or Early April, remove all mulch and most of the soil from around the bases of the plants and prune out all winter damaged stems as appropriate, to prepare your roses for a season of health and beautiful blooms!