

Caring for your Roses

Roses are great! Wonderful! Beautiful! And they can drive you crazy! Some summers, you go all season without any problems at all and others it just seems like one after another. Despite the challenge that growing healthy roses may present, millions of gardeners participate enthusiastically year after year. And this has gone on for centuries - because they are worth it. Nothing else in the garden quite matches the beauty and elegance of the Queen of the Flowers.

When Can Roses Be Planted?

Ready-to-plant, bare root roses sold in cardboard boxes or plastic bags can be planted as soon as they are available in March, April or later. Roses grown in containers can be planted right away in the spring, summer or fall.

Choosing A Location

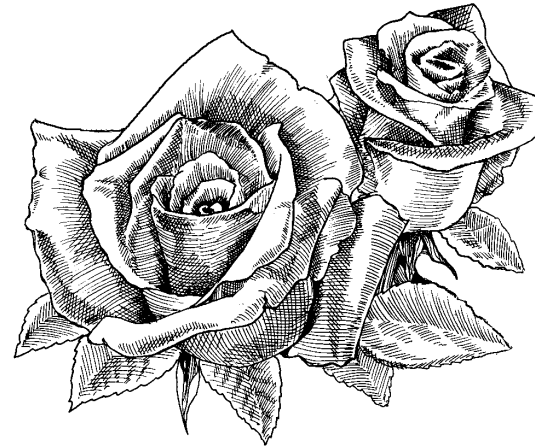
Roses grow best if planted in an open, sunny location with fertile, well-drained soil. The pH of the soil should be near neutral, 6.5 – 7.0. Test your soil to determine whether you need to add lime. Roses shouldn't be planted where their roots will compete with roots from trees and large shrubs. The do, however, work very well when planted among bulbs, annuals, and perennials.

Planting

1. Dig a hole the same depth as the soil level in the container making sure the crown is slightly above the soil level. The hole should be twice the width of the root ball or container.
2. If the plant is in a fiber pot, do not remove it from the container. With a sharp knife, remove the rim of the pot and poke several holes in the sides and bottom.
3. Plants in plastic pots should be removed from container. Bare-root plants in cardboard boxes or plastic bags should be removed from the box or bag.
4. Incorporate **25%** peat moss or compost and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of bone meal with the existing soil. Fill half the hole with the mixture and tamp firmly. Place the plant in the hole and continue to fill and tamp around the plant.
5. Water thoroughly at the time of planting and as need throughout growing season.
6. Fertilize with Rose-Tone or Plant-Tone; repeat every 4-6 weeks beginning in March, making a last application in September.

Pruning

1. Remove dead branches.
2. Remove criss-crossing and rubbing branches.
3. Remove old, weak canes.
4. Constantly check for and remove dead (finished) flowers.
5. Periodically thin out center to improve and maintain good air circulation.



Winterizing After Leaf Drop

1. Rake up fallen leaves from around the plant.
2. Mound up mulch around the bottom third of the plant.
3. Prune back the branches to the main cane. To prune, make a diagonal cut $\frac{1}{4}$ " above a bud that faces to the outside of the bush.
4. It is not necessary to prune climbing roses.
5. If your tree has been potted into a container, the entire container can be moved to a sheltered area. An unheated basement or garage is ideal.
6. If your tree rose has been planted in the ground, a trench should be dug and the tree should be laid in the trench and covered with soil and mulch. This will protect the entire plant.

Rose Insects and Diseases

Are there any roses that won't be bothered by insects and diseases?

There are varieties that are much more resistant to these problems, and others that sustain very little damage. You need to be watchful with all roses so that you can avoid and/or minimize pest problems.

How do I know which varieties are more resistant?

This information is usually printed on the label attached to the rose. If you are unsure, ask any of our salespeople and we'll be glad to find that information for you.

Are there any cultural practices I can use to help avoid these problems?

With roses, an ounce of prevention is worth much more than a pound of cure. First of all, plant your roses in the right place and in the right soil. Once planted, mulch them and avoid spraying water on the leaves. Then – as we said above, be watchful.

I'm concerned about using chemicals. Is there a safer way to deal with rose pests?

There are several organic, environmentally safe products available. Insecticidal soap, pyrethrins and horticultural oil will take care of the vast majority of your insect problems and plain elemental sulfur is a good fungicide.



100 Jericho Turnpike, P. O. Box 648
Westbury, New York 11590
(516) 334-0066 • www.hicksnurseries.com

I've heard about using baking soda and horticultural oil. Does it work?

Oil has been used for ages as a pesticide and the new horticultural oils are so pure that they can be used year around without damage. Oil is also commonly used as a spray adjuvant, helping whatever you are spraying to stick to the foliage longer. The combination of horticultural oil and baking soda (a tablespoon of each per gallon of water) seems to be an effective way to minimize black spot and powdery mildew on many roses.

What are the most common rose diseases?

Black spot and powdery mildew account for the vast majority of disease problems with roses, but you might have an occasional problem with canker or rust.

When I find a few black spots or powdery mildew, can I still treat the plant, or is it too late?

A fungus causes both diseases and fungicides are most effective as preventatives. But, it's not necessarily too late. Remove any diseased leaves and be especially careful to avoid getting the foliage wet. If you notice either of these problems early, routine spraying will probably prevent their spread.

Is there a way to prevent diseases?

Yes, it is important to clean up any infected leaves as they fall and remove them from the area and keep the soil mulched to minimize dirt splashing up onto the leaves. Be very careful to avoid getting the leaves wet.

What will happen if I let the disease go?

Roses that are suffering from diseases go into a steady decline, often ending the season with a pitiful handful of leaves. Since both black spot and powdery mildew carry over in the soil, if you just let it go, you have almost guaranteed your roses will suffer again next season. These cumulative stresses will eventually kill the plants.

What are the most common rose insects in our area?

Aphids and rose slugs account for most of the insect damage on roses in our area. Whitefly, beetles and caterpillars can be a problem, too. Less often, you see leafhoppers, scale, spider mites and thrips. The list may sound frightening, but you rarely have more than one or two insect problems in a season.

How can I identify aphids? What kind of damage do they do? What can I do about them?

Aphids are the most common rose pests. They are soft-bodied, pear-shaped insects that line up along the most tender buds and leaves. They are sucking insects. Aphids are vulnerable to almost all insecticides, especially insecticidal soap, horticultural oil or pyrethrins. Watch closely to keep them from taking over.

Are rose slugs different than regular slugs?

They are actually the larvae of a type of sawfly and can do a lot of damage very quickly, sometimes eating chunks of leaves away, sometimes skeletonizing them. Insecticidal soap or pyrethrin are effective.

How do I deal with the other pests?

It is best to identify the specific pest when you can. There are systemic insecticides that are absorbed by the plant and kill insects for several weeks at a time or you can target the specific pests as you see them, starting with the least toxic product first.

Big pieces of the leaves are missing on my rose bushes. What is happening?

In our area, when parts of leaves are missing, it is usually a caterpillar of some type. Look over the plant carefully and you might find the culprit hiding under a leaf or lying along the stem, often the same color as the leaves.

Sometimes my leaves look like the only part left is the skeleton. What is happening and what can I do?

There are a few pests that seem to eat the green out of each leaf, leaving just the veins. Dusts or systemics that stay on the leaves are usually the most effective.

If my rose buds open and have little brown lines on the petal, what is going on?

That sounds like thrips. They like to get into the flower buds and cause speckling, lines and sometimes deforming the whole flower. Remove infested blooms and spray several times with pyrethrin, horticultural oil - or use a systemic such as Cygon or Orthene.

Should I regularly use the systemic rose care products you see on the market?

There are several good rose care products that combine systemic insecticides with fertilizer. It is up to you whether you want to treat on a regular basis to prevent problems, or deal with problems as they occur.

Recommended Products

- Various Styles of Trellising
- Rose-tone Fertilizer
- Felco Quality Hand Pruners
- Orthenex Rose Spray, Liquid or Aerosol
- Rose Dust
- Horticulture Oil
- Insecticidal Soap
- Pyrethrin (Schultz Roses and Flowers)

If I'm not sure what is happening to my roses, can I bring in a piece and have you identify the problem?
Yes! We would be glad to help determine what is happening to your roses. Snip off a sample that shows what is going on and seal it in a plastic bag.

