



General Rose Care

This Guide is a service of the Minnesota Rose Society

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ROSE CARE STARTS WHEN YOU BUY YOUR ROSES. Visit a rose garden, study pictures or search the internet to acquaint yourself with the type of roses you want. Shrubs, climbers, species, and old garden roses can be incorporated into the landscape as part of a perennial border as mass plantings. Hybrid Teas, grandifloras, floribundas, polyanthas, miniatures or minifloras are often grown in separate beds and can be used for cut flowers.

You may buy rose plants dormant (bare root) or potted. Dormant roses come without soil, the roots wrapped in moss and in poly or paper bag. When purchasing dormant roses specify #1 stock. Dormant roses may be planted between April 10 and May 15. Avoid buying dormant roses that show growth for the growth has taken strength from the plant. Potted roses should show good growth and may be planted from May 15 throughout the growing season. Potted roses should be clean, healthy and have a minimum of 3 good canes.

Planting: Choose a location that gets at least 6 hours of full sun and is away from large trees and shrubs that would compete with the roses for sun, food and water. A well drained sandy loam with a pH of 6.7-6.8 is best. Prepare the soil by incorporating humus (manure, compost, peat) into the soil well prior to planting. Let soil settle before planting. Soak dormant plants in water for several hours before planting. Cut off damaged canes, excess branches and weak growth. Cut back any damaged or very long roots to about 12 inches. Always protect the plant and roots from sun and wind prior to planting. Dig a hole large enough to spread out the roots in a natural shape. Make a cone shaped mound in hole and spread roots evenly down and over the mound. If you will use the Minnesota Tip Method of winter protection then plant the bud union at ground level. If using an alternate method of winter protection set the bud union 2-4 inches below ground level. Half fill the hole with soil and gently press soil into place with hands to eliminate air pockets. Fill the hole with water and let drain away. Fill the soil with the rest of the soil. Mound additional soil over the plant about 6-10 inches high; keep this wet for about 10 days or until new growth has started. When growth has started, carefully remove the soil mound. **DO NOT** fertilize new plants until after their first bloom.

Your potted roses may be planted in much the same way. Dig a hole deep enough to accommodate the plant at the correct height as described above. Water the plant before removing from container. Be careful to keep the soil ball intact. Set plant in hole making sure that any roots coiled around soil ball are straightened out. Half fill hole with soil as above. Water well, let drain, then complete filling hole with soil. No need to mound. Water well.

Pruning: The purpose of pruning is to make plants grow, thrive and produce as you desire. Spring is the time for major pruning, while plants are semi-dormant. Always use sharp tools. Make a diagonal cut, 1/4 inch above and outward facing bud with the high side of the cut on the bud side. Prune so the center of the bush is open. Remove dead, diseased or damaged wood, any crowded, crossing or twiggy growth. Remove suckers from the bud union. To prevent damage from pith borers (cane borer) paint the cut ends of canes with white glue, nail polish, orange shellac or similar material. In pruning take it easy; once cut it cannot be replaced.

Fertilizing depends on you and the amount of time, effort and funds you wish to spend. A handful of well balanced fertilizer worked in and around each bush in the spring and nothing thereafter all season will give you fair roses. Add another handful of the fertilizer 6 weeks later, and you will have better roses. But if you want the best roses you must do a few more things.

If you can, put well rotted manure in your roses beds in the spring. If this is not available, use dehydrated manure, compost or peat. Bone meal or soy meal are also good to apply early in the growing season. Dig a small trench around each bush, apply and recover with soil. Because manures are slow acting and mainly for soil conditioning add of a handful of complete fertilizer in early May, June, July and August around each bush and work into the top 2 inches. In between monthly feedings extra treats such as fish emulsion, liquid manure or liquid fertilizer may be given. Give about 2 quarts per bush. Foliar feeding (used as a spray on leaves) may be given as a quick pick me up. To prevent root burn water your roses well before the application of any fertilizer but particularly before application of water soluble fertilizers. Do not apply any nitrogen containing fertilizers after August 15th.

Watering: After planting your roses properly, the most important thing you can do is to water them. Fertilizing is necessary, but watering is essential, and often most neglected step to growing better roses. Do not count on rain alone to water your roses. Roses need more than the average rainfall. Get an early start on your watering. As soon as you uncover your roses begin watering and continue until they are protected for winter and the ground is frozen. Make sure your roses get at least 1 inch per week, more if the weather is hot, dry and windy, even more if you have a sandy soil.

The manner in which you water depends on the season. In early spring, water from overhead to keep the canes from drying out. You can also water from overhead during a hot, dry summer, but water before noon to allow the leaves to dry off before nightfall. Leaves left wet for too long invite blackspot and rust. It is also wise to let your roses dry before you are going to dust or spray them. Overhead watering is like an invigorating shower to your roses. It makes them feel and look good. However, the BEST way to really put water where it does the most good for growth is to soak them at the base. A watering wand or soaker hose is ideal for this.

MULCHING: This serves many purposes; it helps to conserve moisture in soil, keeps soil cool over root area, helps control weeds, lessens need for cultivation, helps reduce attacks of blackspot and helps improve the structure of the soil. Use 2-3" of compost, leaves, peat moss, rotted manure, pine needles, hay etc. If grass clippings are used, add only a thin layer at a time and keep very loose. Don't use clippings from lawns with many weeds or from lawns recently treated with weed killer. Apply mulch when soil is warmer, usually last week of May or first part of June. Stir up mulch occasionally to give needed aeration to top of rose bed.

KEEP ROSE PLANTS HEALTHY: Another important factor in the care of roses is a GOOD spray program to keep them healthy. It should be done every 7 to 10 days and also after a heavy rain. Spray should be applied in early morning, after dew is gone, or in the evening, NOT during heat of day. Be sure to cover top and bottom sides of foliage, and canes. Avoid careless preparation of mixture. Follow directions exactly and measure accurately. DO NOT GUESS. Exercise care, for all sprays are dangerous. Keep them locked up and away from children. Protect yourself when spraying. It is a good policy to wear a face mask, safety goggles and clothing that covers arms and legs. When through, wash well.

For a small number of roses an all purpose spray, such as Orthenex, which contains an insecticide to kill insects, a fungicide to prevent diseases such as mildew, blackspot, and rust, and a miticide for spider mites can be used. You can mix your own combination of insecticide and fungicide. Mix according to directions on the labels. It is recommended that fungicides be used on a regular basis during the growing season. Insecticides and miticides may be applied on an as needed basis.

Minnesota Roses— Recommended Varieties

Hybrid Tea and Grandiflora

Double Delight—red blend
Dublin—medium red
Folkore—orange blend
Mr. Lincoln—dark red
Gemini—pink blend
Pristine—white
Touch of Class—orange pink
Olympiad—medium red
Queen Elizabeth—pink

Floribundas and Polyanthas

Iceberg—white
Sexy Rexy—medium pink
Europeana—dark red
Lavaglut—dark red
Sunsprite—deep yellow
The Fairy—pink
Playboy—red blend
Hannah Gordon—white
Nicole—white

Miniatures and Mini-Floras

Gourmet Popcorn—white
Irresistable—white
Jean Kenneally—apricot blend
Minnie Pearl—pink blend
Rainbow's End—yellow blend
Rise 'n' Shine—medium yellow
Starina—orange red
Winsome—mauve
Jeanne Lajoie—climber

Hardy Shrub Roses

Champlain—dark red
Cuthbert Grant—medium red
Morden Snowbeauty—white
Prairie Joy—pink
Frontenac—medium pink
William Baffin—pink climber

Species and Old Garden Roses

Alika - Hgallica—med red
Apothecary's Rose -Sp—pink
Rosa Mundi—pink blend
Mme hardy—Alba—white
R. glauca—Sp—medium pink
Charles de Mill—mauve

Semi-Hardy Shrub Roses

Applejack—single pink
Aunt Honey—medium pink
Earth Song—deep pink
Paloma blanca—white
Prairie Flower—pink
Winter Sunset—yellow

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