

# How to Grow Beautiful Roses

## **Step One**

*Plant Selection - so many options, critical decisions, but fun!*

### **Modern Roses**

Hybrid tea: Romantic, long-stem flower blooms, vibrant colors, formal, upright growth, 4 to 5 feet.

Floribunda: Clusters of small flowers, shrub-like growth, 3 to 4 feet.

Grandiflora: Cross between hybrid tea and floribunda, flowers similar to tea but smaller and in clusters, 5 to 6 foot bushes.

*Other common rose forms - climbers, ramblers, miniatures and tree form or standards.*

### **Old roses**

Often called old garden roses or antique roses, most are truly "living antiques;" several types originating from around the world; known for -withstanding adverse growing conditions, disease and insects; variety of sizes; most varieties quite fragrant; blooms generally in clusters; colors vary from deep rose to pastel pink and yellow to white; versatile plants for any landscape.

### **Selection tips**

Use adapted varieties whatever type of rose you choose.

Check with local experts such as consulting rosarians (contact your local rose society), nursery professionals and county extension agents for varieties adapted to your area. Select from modern and old roses.

*Combining different types is just fine.*

## **Step Two**

*Site selection — where to put the purchases*

Choose an east-facing site if possible. Morning sun will dry the foliage quickly reducing pest problems.

Select a site that receives gentle breezes. This provides good air circulation to reduce insect and disease presence.

Roses need at least 6 hours of sunlight a day for maximum performance.

## **Step Three**

*Soil Preparation and Planting - your Insurance for success*

This is the most critical step to insure success with roses. Expend the money and the effort. It will be a worthy investment.

Create a raised bed of at least 10 inches of well drained, highly organic-soil. The bed can be edged with masonry, rock or timbers, or simply crested towards the middle of the bed. Prepare the soil using organic matter, such as compost, manures and shredded bark (see info

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sheet [How to Create New Beds and Amend your Soil.](#)) The goal is to create a soil mixture of half-organic matter and half-existing or trucked-in topsoil. A soil test can be run to help create the perfect soil for your roses.

Don't plant too deep; dig the hole as deep as the root system is tall. If soil preparation is done well, digging the hole can be done with your hands. The top of the root ball should be at the same level as it was grown in the field or the pot. If there is a graft union (on most modern roses, the swollen area at the juncture of the roots and trunk) it should be at ground level. Roses can be planted year round; however the best time is late winter to early spring.

## **Step Four**

*Insect and Disease Management - the pests will be there, but they can be conquered!*

### **Pest Management**

Beyond selecting adapted rose varieties, the most important prevention to pest problems is your presence in the garden. Get out in the garden and look for abnormal leaves, stems or flowers. These may indicate insect or disease problems.

Identify the pest problem first before you treat! Get help from New Garden, a consulting rosarian (contact your local Rose Society), or county extension office. Remember a few insects or spots on your roses may not pose a big enough problem to warrant spraying a pesticide. Healthy plants, natural predators and the environment can prevent most pests from becoming a major problem.

### **Insect problems**

For tiny insects like thrips, aphids and spider mites, use the direct method of inspection - look at the tops and bottoms of leaves, plus check for pest presence by shaking leaves over a white sheet of paper. Look closely — thrips are cigar shaped walking dashes, aphids globular, fat and shiny, and mites are tiny reddish dots that move.

If blooms are brown, deformed or won't open - check for thrips.

New growth that is yellow or covered with shiny honeydew or black sooty mold - check under leaves and on stems for aphids.

Leaves that are puckered, or have a bronze sheen, or tiny white spots — check for spider mites underneath the leaves.

If leaves and blooms are chewed up - check for caterpillars and beetles (especially Japanese beetles in the Triad.)

### **Insecticides**

Spray with the least toxic insecticide, which will do the job. Common insecticides used are **Rose**

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**Rx Systemic Drench**, or **Eight**. Alternative, less-toxic insecticides include insecticidal soaps, horticultural and neem oils, pyrethrins, **Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew** and high pressure water sprays.

Spray from the bottom up on the plant when spraying an insecticide, coating the underside of the leaves thoroughly.

**Always read insecticide label and use caution when using any insecticide.**

## **Disease Problems**

Black spots on the leaves can be identified as the fungus black spot. This disease is spread by water splashing from one leaf to another. Try to avoid getting water on the leaves when watering.

Whitish, powdery covering on leaves or bloom stems can be identified as the fungus powdery mildew. This disease spreads rapidly when temperatures are above 80 degrees and humidity is high. Splashing water does not spread this disease.

Abnormal growth, including dense reddish thorns, stubby, dense leafing and abnormal flower formation may be Rose Rosette Virus, an incurable disease spread by nearly-invisible mites.

Bring a sample in for positive identification, and remove/destroy affected roses if confirmed.

To prevent its spread, treat neighboring roses with **All Seasons Horticultural Spray Oil** or a miticide labeled for eriophyid mites.

## **Fungicides**

Commonly used, effective fungicides include **Rose Rx Systemic Drench**, **Funginail**, **Infuse**, **Captan** and Neem oil.

Fungicides often require repeat applications if weather and plant conditions are conducive to further spread of the disease.

## **Step Five**

*Rose Pruning — there is no big mystery*

For modern roses, prune heavily each year 2 to 3 weeks before spring growth begins. The goal is to prune each bush back to 18 to 24 inches tall, leaving only 4 to 6 main stems/canes, each facing outward in a different direction forming a vase shape. Visualize an umbrella turned upside down.

Old garden roses should simply be pruned to fit the landscape setting. Never prune off more than one-third of the plant.

For spring-blooming climbing roses, prune only in the spring after they bloom, and then only remove dead or damaged canes, plus one or two of the oldest canes to promote new cane growth.

For all types of roses, prune to maintain blooming and health by removing old blooms (called deadheading) as they fade. Promote increased flowering by removing damaged/diseased/dead twigs and blooms; and by pulling off heavily damaged leaves resulting from black spot or

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insects.

## **Step Six**

*Long term care — you don't need to be a slave to the roses!*

Roses are blooming machines. They need the nutrient energy provided by fertilizers. Fertilizer types include slow-release granular forms, water-soluble forms that are diluted and poured onto the soil, and organic fertilizers, such as bone meal. At a minimum, fertilize once in the spring and again in the fall. For maximum performance, fertilize every month using a complete fertilizer (nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium) but don't overdo it with any one nutrient. In general, roses require more water than most shrubs, but less than most flowers and lawns. Water only when the soil is dry to a couple of inches deep, then water deeply to encourage large root systems. Keep the water off the leaves and blooms to prevent diseases. Use your index finger as your soil moisture meter.

For gardens that receive less than 30 inches of rainfall per year, drip irrigation might be a consideration to make watering easier and more efficient. Check with your local nursery professional for help in setting up a drip irrigation system.

Mulch to reduce disease, conserve water, reduce weeds, and keep soil temperatures cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. Mulch with organic products, such as pine bark, cypress bark and compost. Apply a 2 to 3 inch layer of mulch every spring and perhaps again in the fall.

Where soils freeze, implement winter protection practices (mounding soil or straw around the bush, or using "hot caps").

## **For further information and questions:**

Please contact the [Greensboro Rose Society](#)

Your Steps to Growing Beautiful Roses...Good Luck!!!



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