

# Garden Talk

## Rose Basics 101

"Where People who Love roses, Love to Shop"™

It's hard not to love a rose. Those of us contemplating rose gardening are perhaps under the impression that roses are difficult to grow and maintain, not so.

If there is a universally recognized and admired flower, it's the rose. The rose has a long heritage in art, literature, movies, sports and history. Claude Monet's Garden at Giverny, Shakespeare's Sonnets, Citizen Kane's Rosebud, the Run for the Roses and the War of the Roses are all well known. Roses also have a heritage as a symbol of passion and rose gardeners are certainly passionate.

Let's start out by explaining the three basic types of roses available at the garden center.

Bare-root roses are dormant, sold during winter and early spring. Plant them as soon as the ground warms enough to be workable. These roses come with no soil around the roots, thus the name.

Container grown roses are grown in containers at the nursery. They are budding or already blooming and are available spring through summer.

### Growing Types

Roses are defined by their growing type. One type is budded, meaning that one variety of rose is grafted onto the roots of a sturdier variety. The grafting is visible at the bud union. Grafted roses combine the best qual-

ities of strong rootstock with the foliage and blooms of the grafted variety.

Roses are also grown on their own roots. Own-root plants are grown from cuttings so the entire plant is of the same variety. If a grafted rose is heavily pruned or cold-damaged, the rose that grows back may be of the rootstock's variety, not the grafted one you purchased. Under the same circumstances, the own-root rose will grow back true to its variety.

Grading - Roses are graded according



to the quality of their growth. Grades also designate the future size and productivity of the rose. The three grade classifications are: the #1 grade is the very best of a variety. Three or more healthy canes and a strong root system are essential. The #1.5 grade rose has two or more thin canes and usually take longer to develop. The #2 grade rose has one or two small, thin canes and may require extra care to establish.

For the best of the best, look for The All-American Rose Selection (AARS) designation. These roses are judged to be superior in disease resistance, flower production, color and fragrance. With all of the varieties available, you are sure to find a variety to fit your taste and style.

**Planting** - If the area you've chosen for roses doesn't drain well, build up the bed with good topsoil and Watters "Mulch". Keep it mulched to prevent drying. When planting roses the procedure is the same as for other shrubs. Remember a few key factors that especially affect roses:

\*The graft should be slightly above soil level.

\*Prior to planting, cut off any dead leaves as well as decayed or thin shoots. Also prune damaged or extremely long roots on bareroot varieties.

\*Soak bare root roses in tepid water overnight before planting.

\*Always water soil well when planting.

\*Make sure the hole is large enough to accommodate root growth and 3 times wider rather than deeper.

\*Roses appreciate mulch and other organics mixed into the soil when planting.

**Fertilizing** - Roses are heavy feeders and need several applications of fertilizer during the growing season. We have created a unique plant food that roses love called Watters, "**All Purpose Plant Food**". Feed at least three times per year in spring, again in summer and a final application in the fall. Water thoroughly after each feeding.

**Watering** - Roses need water and appreciate being on a drip system. Remember how deep you planted the rose? Water needs to reach that level to get to the roots and keep the plant healthy and blooming. Water thoroughly twice a week if there is no rainfall. Set a watering schedule and adjust as dictated by the weather.



Even though you may see fewer flowers during the summer, cooler weather will bring more flowers, so keep up the water schedule. To discourage black spot and mildew, water in the morning and avoid wetting the leaves.

**Mulching** - A 3-4" inch layer of "**Shredded cedar bark**" will control weeds, retain soil moisture and help maintain a constant soil temperature. As organic mulch breaks down, it improves soil structure and adds nutrients.

**Pruning** - Proper pruning increases blooms and promotes healthy plants. In general, prune when growth just begins. This is typically in the month

of March. First remove all dead wood, cutting back to healthy wood.

Reduce the number of canes. The number of canes to leave and their recommended length differ by variety.



During the growing season, prune only to remove diseased foliage or canes and deadhead faded flowers. Destroy any diseased foliage to control disease spread.

**Rose Care Tips** - Buy good, healthy plants. Roses need six hours of sun per day to maintain health and product flowers.

Plant in an area with good air circulation to decrease disease susceptibility. Avoid overcrowding.

Prepare the soil with Watters "**Mulch**" before planting.

Treat both the top and bottom of the leaves when applying sprays or dusts to leaves.

**Primary Pests & disease problems.** Black Spot - circular black spots with fringed margins and possibly yellow edges appear on leaves. Leaves may drop prematurely. Spray foliage every 7 to 10 days throughout the growing season with Watters "**Systemic Fungicide**". Try to keep the foliage dry and don't wa-

ter with over head sprinklers. Rake up and destroy fallen leaves. Spray entire plant with lime-sulfur dormant spray in late winter. Apply 1 to 2 inches of fresh mulch atop the rose bed each spring.

**Rose Virus** - yellow spots or patterns on foliage and malformed new growth. Rose virus is transmitted during grafting or budding. There is no successful way to control this virus with chemicals. Remove and destroy an infected plant if it becomes too weak to bloom properly.

**Powdery Mildew** - thin layer of gray to white powdery material forms on young plant parts. Infected leaves may distort, curl and turn yellow to purple, then drop off. Spray foliage at the first sign of problems with Watters all natural "**Triple Action**". Severe cases should be sprayed with "Systemic Fungicide". Spray again at intervals of 7 to 10 days if mildew reappears. Rake up and destroy fallen leaves.

**Thrips**, also called 'No-see-ums', causes leaves, flowers and their buds to be flecked with yellow or brown streaks and spots. Shake infected flower over white paper. Tiny red insects will be easily seen against the white background. Remove and destroy infested blooms and buds. Spray flowers, buds and foliage with Watters "**Fruit Tree Spray**" at intervals of 7 to 10 days until the infestation is gone.



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