



# *Bucks Country Gardens*

## **Roses Planting And Care Guide**

### **SELECTING A PLANT**

Bush roses are grouped into several "classes", i.e. hybrid tea, floribunda, etc. Each "class" of rose has different characteristics and growth habits. When choosing roses, consider not only flower color, but also the shape of the flower, ultimate height of the plant, quantity of blooms per plant and resistance to disease and insects. In addition to the bush roses, there are climbing roses, miniature roses and tree roses.

### **WHERE TO PLANT**

Roses prefer the sunniest place in the garden or any place where they will get at least 5-6 hours of sunshine a day. If they are planted where they are shaded during the hottest hours of the day, the flowers will be preserved much longer. Roses require good drainage – they won't tolerate wet feet. They do best in a heavy soil (such as clay mixed with a lot of organic matter (dried cow manure, peat moss) to loosen the texture of the soil). If the soil is light (sandy) add even more organic matter to prevent moisture from draining away too fast. The soil should be slightly acidic (pH of 6.0-6.8). You can raise the pH one point by adding 5 lbs. of ground limestone per 100 square feet. Lower the pH half to one point by adding 3 lbs. of iron sulfate per 100 square feet.

### **HOW TO PLANT**

All of our roses are planted in pressed paper pots. Roses should not be removed from pots for planting – the removing of the pots will damage newly-formed feeder roots and may harm the plant itself. We suggest cutting or breaking off 1"-2" of the top rim so that when planted, the pot will be below ground level. Also, cut a few holes in the sides and bottom of the pot. For a planting mixture: add 1/3 topsoil, 1/3 peat moss and 1/3 perlite. Place enough soil mixture in the bottom of the hole so that when the plant is set into the hole, the ground level in the pot is even with or slightly higher than the surrounding will want to form a saucer around the planting hole using extra soil and fill in with mulch. Two to four inches of mulch will conserve moisture and keep the soil 10 to 20 degrees cooler than an unmulched bed.

### **WATERING**

Roses should be watered at least once a week during spring and summer. A single deep watering is much more beneficial than several light waterings. The best time to water is early morning, so that the moist leaves will dry during the day. (Try to avoid getting the foliage wet – since moist foliage encourages the spread of disease.) Test your soil to see if the roses need more water by sticking your forefinger into the soil as far as you can. If the soil seems dry, the roots probably need moisture.

### **FERTILIZING**

After planting, spread approximately 1 cup or ROSE-TONE (or similar fertilizer for Roses) on the soil surface directly under the plant. You may cultivate it into the top 2-inches of soil. Continue feeding once a month until September, then discontinue feeding. Fertilizing after this time will cause new growth to develop which will not have time to harden-off before freezing weather.

## **PRUNING**

Your roses were pruned when they were potted, so no additional pruning is necessary the first year. Major pruning should be done only in the spring when buds begin to swell. However, remove the weak or diseased canes anytime. The most common method of pruning is to remove only the wood killed over the winter and branches, which cross through the center of the bush and rub against each other. Pruning by this method results in a rosebush, which grows larger and fuller and produces more blooms.

A second method is to remove not only the winter-killed wood and crosses branches, but also about half the length of the healthy canes. This method results in a bush with fewer, but larger flowers. Make cuts about 1/8" to 1/4" above an outside bud. Seal the cuts with pruning sealer. If you like larger flowers, you may want to 'disbud' your plants by removing all but the top flower bud on each stem. The plant then concentrates its energy into the remaining buds, resulting in fewer, but larger blooms.

## **INSECT AND DISEASE CONTROL**

The key to healthy rose plants is regular attention. Roses that are well fed, well watered, and sprayed regularly will be more resistant to disease and insects. Begin your spray program by applying a dormant oil spray in February – before the buds begin to breakout. Begin applying pesticides in early spring before any damage can be seen. Continue applications once a week until hot weather, then reduce applications to once every two weeks. Continue the spray program into November. Pest control need not be time-consuming. A variety of products are available which allow you to combine several applications into one (products such as a systemic rose & flower care, 3-way rose & flower care, etc.). For the gardener who prefers to mix his own spray, Funginex (Ortho) combined with Orthene Insect Control provides good protection against pests. The best time of day for dusting is late evening, when the air is still and fresh dew is on the foliage. Spraying should be done in the morning, but only after the dew has dried. When spraying, be sure to spray the undersides of the leaves as well as the tops.

## **WINTER PROTECTION**

The main danger in our zone is not the cold itself, but the drying wind and frequent fluctuations in temperature. Near the end of November or in early December (before frost sets in) mound soil 6 to 8 inches around the base of the rose plant. You may cover the tops with straw or pine branches.

For Climbing Roses: Tie canes together and cover with straw and burlap. Mound soil around the base of the plant as you would for a bush rose.

**For Tree Roses:** Trim the top so you have a 12-15 inch crown. Wrap the trunk with tree wrap, overlapping from bottom to top so that rain or other elements can't get in. Cover the crown with tar paper and/or burlap and secure. Mound soil around the base 8 inches high.

## **CLASSES OF ROSES**

### **Hybrid Tea**

Hybrid teas are the most common type of roses. They have large flowers with many petals produced on long stems. They are perfect for cutting and flower continuously throughout the summer.

### **Floribunda**

The Floribunda's flowers are smaller than the Hybrid tea's, but there are more flowers per stem at a time. Floribundas bloom in clusters continuously all summer. They are ideal for hedges and along walkways.

### **Grandiflora**

The Grandiflora rose was developed by crossing the Hybrid tea with the Floribunda. Grandifloras are very vigorous but its flowers are smaller than the Hybrid tea or the Floribunda. The Grandiflora produces more flowers per stem than a Hybrid tea, but fewer than a Floribunda. Grandifloras also grow taller than Hybrid teas or Floribundas, sometimes reaching 6 feet.

## MONTHLY ROSE CARE GUIDE

### January/February:

- Apply dormant oil spray
- Prepare beds for new plantings

### March:

- Prune bush roses to 18-23" above the ground
- Fertilize and cultivate in 2" deep
- Water roses slowly

### April/May:

- Begin fertilizing monthly
- Begin weekly spraying or dusting programs

### June/July:

- Water if rain doesn't soak soil weekly to depth of 6"
- Cut spent blooms to encourage more flower production

### August/September:

- Fertilize last time for season
- Prune out weak or diseased canes

### October:

- Remove dead and diseased leaves from beds

### December:

- Cut back overly tall bush roses
- Tie canes of climbing roses together
- Cut crown of tree roses back to 12-15"; cover with burlap
- Mound soil 6-8" around base of plant

If you need additional questions answered, please give us a call, we're here to help! 215-766-7800