

Roses

Roses require six or more hours of direct sun per day and a fertile, reasonably moist soil.

Choosing a site. Roses grow best where they receive at least 6 hours of direct sun per day (more sun means more blooms) and where the soil is well drained. They tolerate a range of soil types (from sand to clay), as long as care is taken to prepare the soil at planting time.

Planting. Before planting a bareroot Rose, remove and discard the packing material and soak the roots for a few hours (but no longer). Then dig a planting hole that allows sufficient room for the depth and spread of the roots. (If you're planting a Climbing Rose, locate the hole so that the base of the Rose will be about 1 foot from the trellis.) Discard about one third of the soil dug from the hole and replace it with at least as much organic matter—such as compost, aged manure, or leafmold—and mix it into the remaining soil.

Next, set the plant in the hole so that the bud union (the bulge where the top was grafted onto the rootstock) or the point where the first branch leaves the main stem (on Roses that were not grafted) is 3 inches below the surrounding soil in the North, and at the same level or an inch above the soil in mild-winter climates. Then push the mix of soil and organic matter back into the hole, tamping firmly as you go. Water thoroughly.

Mound the soil around the canes to a height of 12–15in. This prevents the canes from drying out in the sun and wind. Check the canes every couple of days for new growth, and remove the mounded soil gradually once growth appears.

Moisture needs. Newly planted Roses need the equivalent of 1 inch of water per week throughout their first growing season. If water doesn't fall from the sky, you must supply it. A generous layer of organic mulch (compost or composted manure is best) helps keep the soil evenly moist.

Fertilizing. With the exception of the species (which should be fertilized just once in early spring with granular fertilizer such as 10-10-10), Roses grow more vigorously, bloom more prolifically, and show greater resistance to diseases if fertilized several times during the growing season—in early spring (except the first spring after planting), immediately after the first wave of bloom, and again in early August. (Southern and western gardeners may wish to fertilize more frequently, fertilizing monthly from early spring until June, pausing during the heat of summer, and fertilizing again in August and September to close out the season.) We prefer natural fertilizers such as fish emulsion or seaweed extract, applied in solution, because they release their nutrients more slowly and evenly than chemical fertilizers.

About pests and diseases. The Roses we offer were selected for their vigor and their resistance to pests and diseases. If planted and grown as we suggest, they will be healthy, and healthy plants are much less troubled than plants under stress. Even if a healthy plant does suffer at the hands of a pest or disease, it will likely endure and recover without intervention on the part of the gardener. Some roses are prone to fungus problems (such as black spot) in hot, humid areas. Cleaning up old foliage and cutting back affected canes is important for disease control. Spraying the leaves with Bordeaux mixture, a copper-based fungicide, can help once symptoms appear (follow the manufacturer's instructions).

Pruning. Prune Roses to remove deadwood and to control ungainly growth. Deadwood can be removed at any time. Other pruning should be done in early spring on Climbers, Rugosas, English, and Modern Roses. At that time, remove any weak or crossing branches. If the bush has become too tall, the stems may be cut back by 1/3 to 1/2. With the exception of the Rugosas, which produce attractive hips (fruits), remove the spent flowers of reblooming Roses to promote more bloom, cutting the stems back to the first large bud at the base of a set of 5 leaflets. 'New Dawn' reblooms best if stems are cut back to the **second** set of 5 leaflets.

Overwintering. Much has been written about techniques for overwintering Roses. In our experience, the best way to get Roses through winter is to choose plants adapted to your climate zone. That said, if you live near a Rose's cold limit and you garden on an exposed site or in an area where rapid temperature fluctuations are common, you should mound two shovelfuls of composted manure, garden soil, compost, or shredded leaves over the base of the plant in late fall—ideally after the ground freezes. Pull the mounding material away from the stem as new growth emerges in spring. Do not prune Roses back in fall; wait until spring to prune branches injured over winter.

