

Rose Maintenance

Much of the information presented here applies to hardy shrub roses that grow well in Colorado and is also fairly basic. Please talk with a Boulder Valley Rose Society member if you want more details.

Planting

General Guidelines:

1. Plant anytime the soil is not frozen.
2. Choose a site that drains well and gets a minimum of 5 hours of sun a day. There are very few roses that will thrive with less sun.
3. Dig a hole that is wider and deeper than the pot or root ball.
4. Prepare the soil dug from the hole by mixing it with approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ that amount of compost. This is not a case where more is better; it is possible to use too much compost.
5. Make 2 cups of a fertilizer mixture, using 1 cup each of Mile-Hi Rose Feed and Alfalfa.
6. Loosen the soil in the bottom of the hole and mix in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fertilizer mixture.
7. Place the rose in the hole.
8. Refill the hole with the compost/soil mixture and the rest of the fertilizer mixture.
9. Make a saucer of soil around the base of the rose to hold water.
10. Water thoroughly.

Own-Root Potted Roses:

Follow the General Guidelines above. Plant the rose to the same depth as the soil line in the pot or if the rose needs stabilizing, plant it deeper.

Grafted Potted Roses:

Follow the General Guidelines above. The graft is usually above the soil line in the pot. Plant the graft 2" to 6" below the soil line. This protects the graft from frost.

Bare-Root Roses

Follow the General Guidelines above with these differences:

1. Plant the rose while it is still dormant.
2. Trim any broken roots. You may have to trim very long roots for the rose to fit in the hole.
3. Soak the roots in a bucket of water for 24 hours before planting.
4. Mound a cone of the soil with fertilizer mixture in the bottom of the hole.
5. Spread the roots over and around the cone of soil.
6. Plant a grafted rose 2" to 6" below the soil line. Plant an own-root rose deep enough to stabilize it.

7. Refill the hole and water following the General Guidelines.
8. Mound more soil over the canes as high as possible to keep them from drying out.
9. When the canes show growth, carefully remove the soil.

Transplanting

It's best to transplant roses before they leaf out. Follow the planting General Guidelines above for potted roses.

Simple Pruning

Pruning gives your rose an attractive shape, encourages new growth, and keeps it healthy by removing dead, diseased, old, and insect-infected canes. Think about how you want your plant to look. Pruning is like giving your rose a haircut. A bad pruning job will usually outgrow itself.

Important: Wear gloves and use a good pair of sharp pruners.

When: Spring when the forsythia are blooming (mid- or late April) is the time to do the most extensive rose pruning. At that time you should see the leaf buds on the canes just beginning to swell. If you miss this early pruning, you can still prune later, however, later pruning affects the number of blooms on your plant. Don't prune in the fall.

General Guidelines:

Note: For young roses in their first or second year, do no pruning or only minimal pruning of live growth.

1. Prune out the dead wood, the entire branch or cane, if necessary. Dead wood is brown and dry. If you're not sure what's dead and what's alive, wait until the rose leafs out.
2. Prune out branches or canes that cross over and rub against each other, removing the weakest cane.
3. Prune out small, twiggy side growth.
4. When thinning the number of canes, remove older canes first. Prune the cane to the base of the rose. Old canes usually have a gray or brownish, weathered appearance. Removing old growth encourages new vigorous growth.
5. Shape and size the plant by cutting the strong canes to a uniform length. Make the cut $\frac{1}{4}$ inch above a bud that is facing outwards. You want the new growth to grow out, not into the rose.
6. Make the cut at a 45- to 60-degree angle, so water runs off the wound.
7. If you have time, it's a good idea to seal the cut wounds of the larger branches or canes with Vaseline or Elmer's glue to keep out borers.

Guidelines by Rose Type:

- Repeat-blooming shrub roses: David Austin recommends cutting no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the length of the canes.
- Once-blooming roses: If you want to reduce the size of these roses, prune after they bloom; otherwise, you will reduce the number of blooms.

- Climbing roses: Remove the dead canes and trim for shape.
- Hybrid tea/floribunda/grandiflora roses: Cut back as much as 12” to 18” above the soil line.
- Miniature roses: Treat them the same as repeat-blooming shrub roses.

Deadheading Roses

To promote new bud growth and blooming, remove the dead flowers. Cut old blooms just above a 5- or 7-leaved leaf stem. (This also applies to cutting the roses for a bouquet.) **If you’re short of time, snap off the spent blooms.** After the first flush of blooms is also a good time to combine deadheading and pruning to shape the rose.

It is best to allow the flowers to form hips after September 1. This will signal the plant to become dormant for the winter. **Cutting blooms to bring inside this time of year is fine; don’t deny yourself fall bouquets!**

Fertilizing

We recommend Mile-Hi Rose Feed because of the quality of the ingredients. Plus it’s organic, and there is less chance of burning if you over-fertilize.

Note: These guidelines are for shrub roses. Hybrid teas may require additional fertilization.

When: Fertilize in early spring – April 15 to May 15 – as the leaves start to expand. A second application may be applied in September. Two applications have been effective at the Dushanbe Tea House rose garden.

Watering

Roses require 1 to 2 inches of water per week, either from rain or your hose.

When: Morning is the best time to water.

How Much: Water deeply so the soil is wet 5 to 6 inches below the surface.

How Often: Water at least once a week. During the heat of summer, you may have to water twice a week. Water if the leaves look wilted in the cool of the morning.

Rose Pests

Pest	What it looks like	What to do
Aphids	Small green or brown insects that infest new growth, including the bud. Watch for shiny sap on the leaves. Aphids like it moist and cool.	A sharp stream of water to the infested area regularly helps. If there are a lot of aphids, spray the area with Insecticidal Soap. Repeat as needed.
Spider Mites	Watch for yellow and brownish crisp leaves near the ground. Mites like it hot and dry.	A sharp stream of water to the under side of the foliage three days in a row will stop an infestation. Watch carefully and repeat as needed.

Mildew	White/gray powder on leaves and stems and curled leaves. Bud stems bend so the bud points downward.	Spray with a fungicide or a preventative such as Green Cure. Kelp applied to the soil has also been known to help. It's best to start spraying early in the season before the disease gets going. April is not too early to start if the roses are growing vigorously. Try to spray every 10 days to two weeks through June and start again in late August. Lots of sunshine and no watering from late afternoon until morning keeps fungus from getting a strangle hold on roses. Cool and moist conditions encourage most fungal diseases. Also good air circulation is needed. If the plants are dense with leaves it may be necessary to thin some of the foliage. What's
Black Spot	Yellow leaves with dark spots. It starts near the ground and inside the bush.	Same as Mildew.

Winter Protection

To protect roses from our winters, mound soil or compost 10 inches deep around the base of the rose. Established roses are hardier and may handle winter without this effort.

Carefully remove the soil in the spring when you do your pruning, as there may be new growth under the soil.

Useful Books

Note: Many books about rose cultivation are geared to the East and West coasts, which have different growing conditions from Colorado.

The Rose Bible, by Rayford Clayton Reddell. A classic reference book for novice and expert gardeners, filled with photographs.

Botanica's Roses: Encyclopedia of Roses, by Peter Beales. Provides alphabetical entries of wild and cultivated roses, including origin, characteristics, and growing conditions.

The Ultimate Rose Book, by Stirling Macoboy. Features over 1500 rose varieties with beautiful photographs.

A Year of Roses, by Stephen Scanniello. A month-by-month schedule of chores to be completed in a rose garden (East coast).

Old Roses and English Roses, by David Austin. Information about cultivating English roses.

Hardy Roses: An Organic Guide to Growing Frost- and Disease-Resistant Varieties, by Robert A. Osbourne. A good reference book for choosing frost-resistant roses and growing them without harsh chemicals.

Random House Book of Roses, by Roger Phillips. Contains beautiful photographs of 1400 roses.