



Uncanoonuc Mt. Perennials

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*Look for the bright blue dots!
They mark extra hardy rose varieties
that we do not winter mulch*



Rose Fundamentals

The notion that growing roses is terribly difficult and/or time consuming is outdated. There's been an explosion of modern shrub roses introduced in recent years that has totally changed the game (many of which are both lovely and truly low maintenance plants). And partly it's a response to the mystique that surrounds them. "Roses! *So special!* Must be difficult to grow." Not true. Remember, roses don't know they're special; they're plants. Choose carefully, satisfy their basic site requirements and give them pretty much the same maintenance you do the rest of your garden. Then prepare to be delighted. Roses, even just one or two, can add a whole new layer of interest to your garden and pleasure to your life.

While many antique and species roses bloom only once a season, most modern roses are everblooming. Well grown plants will have a heavy flush of bloom for a month or more in early summer, scattered but regular production of flowers through the season and another bloom period in the fall. This is what "all season" or "late June/July to frost" means. Remember that deadheading (removing spent blossoms) is important to keep plants reblooming, and that some varieties are just plain faster to rebud than others.

WHERE

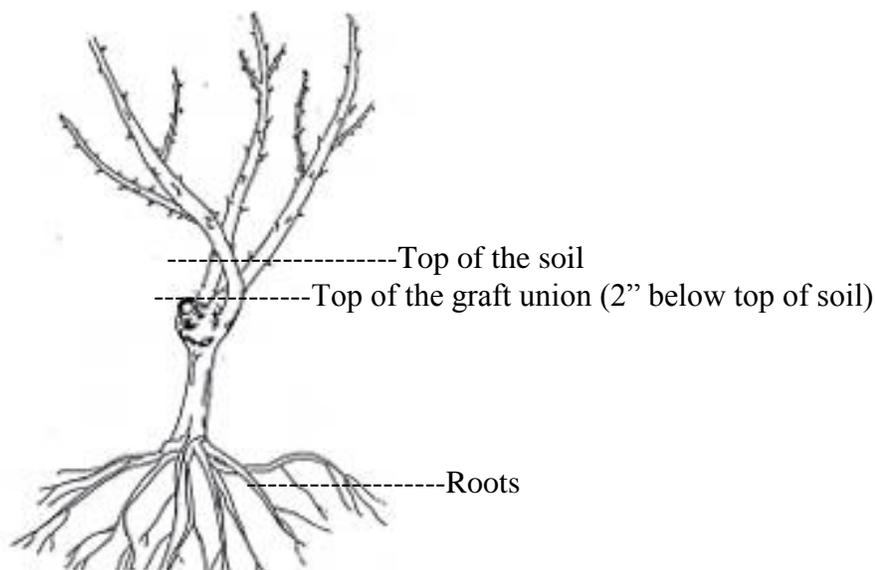
Choose a location in full sun – one that receives at least six hours of direct sun a day, preferably more. Morning sun is especially desirable, because rain and dew will evaporate quickly which discourages fungal diseases. Partial shade for part of the afternoon is acceptable and even helps blossoms retain their color better during hot weather. Good drainage is a necessity because roses will not tolerate "wet feet." If water stands at or near the surface of the soil at any time of year choose another spot. Like many ornamental plants roses prefer a slightly acid soil (a pH of 5.5-6.5) but will do well over a wide pH range. If your soil is very acid, lime will modify the situation, but in general, soil texture is more important. A rich, fertile loam is ideal. Generous amounts of organic matter will greatly improve less than perfect soils - aged manure or compost are both excellent sources. If the soil is a heavy clay, the addition of organic matter will encourage clumping of the soil particles which facilitates good rooting and drainage. If the soil is light and sandy, organic matter will give it body and increase its moisture holding capacity. New home owner's take note - if the soil is fill from construction, remedial measures won't help. Remove the top two feet and replace it with good topsoil. Plant roses far enough away from trees and hedges that would take up root space, fertilizer and water intended for the roses. Allow adequate space between plants and avoid placement too near buildings. Roses need both good air circulation (to encourage rapid drying of the foliage) and protection from strong winds. Avoid planting in "frost pockets" or hollows. **In short, plant roses in a sunny, open but not exposed area. Be sure the soil is fairly rich and moist but well-drained.**

HOW

Dig a hole at least 18" deep and wide. Mix organic matter with the soil you've removed - 1/3 by volume is a good place to start. To remove the plant from the pot, place a hand on top of the soil and tip the pot over. Hold on to the pot and lift it up and off the rootball. Locate the bud or graft union - the bulge where the named variety was joined to the rootstock. Position the rose in the hole so that the top of the graft union will be two inches below the soil surface. In our climate this is critical to successful over-wintering.



If the bud or graft union is not visible - not all roses are grafted - position the rose so it will be at the same level as it was growing in the container. Fill the planting hole in gradually pushing the soil down with your hands as you go. Once the plant is in position use your feet to thoroughly tamp the soil down. This will make sure that your rose is firmly in position and that any air pockets in the soil have been eliminated. Water deeply.



TYPES OF ROSES

Hybrid Teas - Prized for their long pointed buds and gorgeous, high centered blossoms, hybrid teas define the word “rose” to many people. Their color range is vast from pure white through every shade of yellow, orange, pink, red, maroon and lavender. The blossoms are borne singly on the end of long stems which make them ideal for cutting. Many are fragrant, but this characteristic varies. Hybrid teas often have a stiff, upright habit which can be challenging to work into a landscape. Some, especially older varieties, are disease prone. Among the newer varieties are more graceful and disease resistant choices, but they will still require winter protection here in southern New Hampshire.

Floribundas - For a long time they were second only to the hybrid teas in popularity. (We still adore them.) The floribundas tend to have smaller flowers (single, semi-double or double) less refined in form but borne in large clusters and providing striking color effects. The color range is as varied as that of the hybrid teas. Some are fragrant, some aren't. Shorter stems does not mean they aren't fabulous for cutting - they are. Think smaller bouquets, single sprays, nosegays. As a group, the plants are shorter, bushier and somewhat more hardy than the hybrid teas. Still, winter protection is recommended for them.

Ground Cover Roses - This is not an official classification for roses, but a purely practical designation to help gardeners find what will work for them. We put low maintenance, long blooming varieties with a low, spreading habit in this group. Depending on the variety, they can work well tucked into a border, draped over a wall or used as a colorful, easy ground cover. No winter protection needed.

Miniature Roses - Most miniatures are 1 to 2' high and wide with the size of their foliage and flowers reduced to be in scale with their overall proportions. They are big on charm, easy to grow and very versatile. Miniatures are disease resistant and don't require winter protection.

Grandifloras - A purely American classification used to designate roses that are intermediate between hybrid teas and floribundas - taller than floribundas with a more informal look than hybrid teas. The flowers tend to be larger than floribundas and are usually borne in small clusters on long stems. The validity of the group may be in dispute, but the loveliness of the roses is not. Winter protection recommended.

Polyanthas - One of the parents (with hybrid teas) of the floribunda roses, polyanthas are two to three foot plants noted for their hardiness and large clusters of small blooms that are freely produced all season. 'The Fairy' is one of the most well known of this group. Some need winter protection, some don't. 'The Fairy' does not.

Rugosas - The old favorite beach rose, Rosa rugosa, its selections and hybrids are a group whose value is "far above rubies." Shrub roses, varying in height from three to ten feet, the Rugosas are noted for their handsome, leathery, quilted foliage. They are disease resistant and rock hardy - no winter protection needed through zone 4; for some through zone 3. Tolerant of sandy soil and salt spray; undemanding and reliable. Blossoms are single to semi-double in a wide range of colors from pure white through all shades of pink and crimson, with a few yellows thrown in for good measure. Many Rugosas are delightfully fragrant, most bloom through the season and many have ornamental (and edible) hips. Fall foliage color - a blend of yellow and orange is often outstanding.

Climbers - Roses lack tendrils or holdfasts and do not twine (hence none are true climbers) but many varieties have long canes that can be trained to a fence, trellis or other support. The most common type, large flowered climbers are hybrids of wild climbers; pillar roses are climbers whose growth is compact enough to be conveniently trained to a post or other support. Ramblers are roses with very long flexible canes that are ideal for training on fences or archways. Sports of modern roses have resulted in climbing hybrid teas, floribundas and even miniatures. Trailers are varieties well suited for use as ground covers. Some roses can be grown as either a tall shrub or trained as a climber. Need for winter protection varies.

David Austin's English Roses - "New roses in the old tradition", this famous breeder calls them. Old roses crossed with modern ones to produce hybrids with old-fashioned fragrance and charm, along with the repeat bloom and expanded color range of newer roses. This enormous group includes many, many varieties of extraordinary beauty. We consider Mr. Austin a genius if not actually a minor god. Winter protection is recommended for all the English roses.

Modern Shrub Roses - An umbrella that covers both one of a kind and a number of lines or brands of roses. Hardy, vigorous, low maintenance and showy are attributes usually associated with this diverse group. These traits and the plant's distinctive appearance varies from brand to brand and plant to plant. Recent years have seen an explosion of different brands. The relative merits and real value to the gardener of these lines will emerge over time. We keep trialing different varieties always on the lookout for special plants to share with you. Some lines are clearly unique, beautiful and with us to stay. A few of our favorites are listed below. No winter protection needed.

*Knock Out Roses

*Easy Elegance Roses

*Canadian Explorer Roses

MAINTENANCE

Fertilizing: We fertilize our roses the same way we fertilize the rest of our gardens. We broadcast a balanced granular fertilizer around each rose every April and give another feeding (usually lighter) in early July. There are specially formulated “rose food” fertilizers that are, no doubt, fine products. We’ve never tried them. Remember, too much fertilizer promotes lush growth that is more prone to insect and disease problems and more subject to winter injury. Pick up a copy of our handout ‘The ABC’s of Fertilizing Ornamental Gardens’ or print it from the Growing Tips section under Resources on our homepage.

Mulching: We are firm believers in mulch. Weed suppression, moisture conservation and other practical benefits aside, it looks good. Use it. Pick up a copy of our handout ‘Mulch and the Perennial Garden’ or print it from the Growing Tips section under Resources on our homepage.

Watering: Thorough watering at planting time and as your rose gets established in its new home are key. Regular, deep waterings (whenever Mother Nature doesn’t come through) right through the fall are highly recommended.

PRUNING: Don’t be afraid. Arm yourself with gloves, a sharp pair of clippers (loppers and a pruning saw too for older, larger plants) and some basic information.

Modern Roses: When the buds begin to swell, its time. Remove all winter killed canes (stems) and those that show signs of disease. Diseased canes will have discolored and/or sunken areas; winter killed canes are black and shrunken. Prune back to sound wood - the pith or center of the cane will be creamy white - making a clean, angled cut just above a bud. To get a more open, shapely plant, prune to outside buds where possible. Remove twiggy growth, canes growing towards the center of the bush and the weaker of any two crossing branches. Some years this won’t leave a whole lot to look at. Be patient - most will come back and flower even when killed back to near the ground.

Shrub Roses: The advice for modern roses pretty much applies here too. The major difference is that usually the shrub roses have a much larger framework to deal with. You’re aiming for a balance between younger and older canes, healthy wood that’s well distributed. If a shrub rose is getting bigger than you like - cut it back. It’s OK. Really.

Climbing Roses: Climbers and ramblers need a somewhat different approach to pruning. In spring remove dead or diseased canes. Plants can be reduced in height if needed and side branches shortened. Large flowered climbers bloom best on wood less than four years old, so if replacement canes are well established remove one or more of the oldest canes. (Some people advocate pruning climbers after the first big flush of bloom. We find it much easier to prune before the plants have leafed out and do this “renewal pruning” in the early spring and tie in to the support any canes that need it. There’s a lot to be said for being able to see what you’re doing.) Ramblers produce most of their flowers on one year old wood. Prune them back after flowering, concentrating on the oldest canes. This stimulates the growth of new wood – next years “flower power.” Note: Strips of pantyhose make strong, flexible and nearly invisible ties for climbing roses.

Suckers: Occasionally a vigorous cane will suddenly appear that looks nothing like the rose it’s growing from. These sprouts or suckers are actually emerging from the rootstock below your named variety. Snipping one off at soil level will only encourage it, so dig down to its point of emergence and cut there. Some roses spread by suckering (Rugosas and the old garden roses known as Gallicas come to mind.) The canes, foliage and flowers will be identical to the mother plant, but this does not hold you hostage to them. Removal of unwanted suckers of this type can keep the plant’s size in bounds, a worthy cause.

Deadheading: Removal of faded flowers is recommended for neatness, sanitation and the encouragement of repeat bloom. Don't snip right underneath the blossom or cluster of blossoms. Cut a few inches down the stem, just above a large leaflet. Don't deadhead those varieties that form ornamental hips.

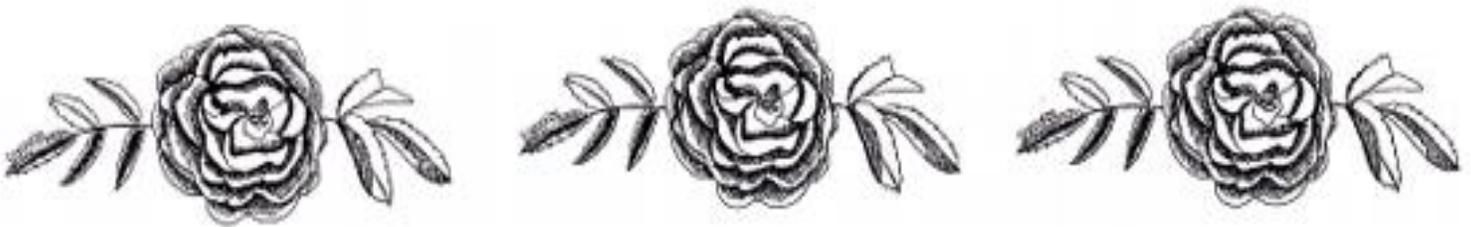
PEST CONTROL: It's a big, bad world out there. Diseases and insects are part of it. Remember that a vigorous, well grown plant is less subject to attack and can withstand one better than a plant under stress.

Diseases - Black spot and powdery mildew are the two most common. Plant resistant varieties. (Within all the different types of roses, susceptibility to different diseases varies. And healthy foliage has been a major goal of modern rose breeding.) Provide adequate spacing which allows for good air circulation. Avoid overhead watering if you can. Practice good sanitation which includes removing and destroying infected plant parts, fallen leaves and prunings. An array of protective sprays, including some organic ones, are available. See below.

Insects - Aphids, caterpillars, and Japanese beetles are three of the most common. Insecticidal soaps, "soft" chemicals like neem-based products and other materials like those found in general purpose rose sprays can help. Japanese beetles are the biggest challenge. Hand-picking (into a container of soapy water) can be somewhat effective (and definitely satisfying) on a small number of plants. We have greatly reduced their numbers here by treating our turf with Scott's GrubEx. It's totally safe for people and pets. (Japanese beetle traps only serve to attract more beetles to your garden. Give them to neighbors you don't like. Milky spore disease is not hardy enough to become established and be effective against Japanese beetles in northern gardens. It is a waste of your time and money.)

For advice: UNH Cooperative Extension's Education Center & Information Line
(1-877-398-4769, 9am - 2pm Monday - Friday)

WINTER PROTECTION: There are a multitude of roses that can grow here without any winter protection at all. This is great. Then there are the marginally hardy roses that we can grow if we winter mulch them. This is great, too. Early summer would seem strangely empty without the luscious blooms of our David Austin roses. We don't mind tucking them in during the late fall and relish the uncovering in early spring. We call it gardening. Pick up a copy of our handout 'Wintering Roses in Southern New Hampshire' or print it from the Growing Tips section under Resources on our homepage.



OWN ROOT vs BUDDED/GRAFTED ROSES: We offer both own root and grafted roses. We seek out the loveliest varieties and the best performers for our climate irrespective of how they were propagated. The hardiness (if planted correctly), disease resistance and overall beauty of a rose is determined by what variety it is, not by how it was propagated. End of story.

GROWING ROSES IN CONTAINERS: Roses grown in pots can be a gorgeous and easy way to bring their beauty and fragrance to your dooryard or patio. The bigger the container the better - it will need less frequent watering and will thrive longer before becoming potbound. Potted roses will need winter protection. Pick up a copy of our handout 'Overwintering Potted Ornamentals' or print it from the Growing Tips section under Resources on our homepage. We keep potted roses for three seasons, and then start fresh with new plants.