



GROWING

IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO

# roses

## Zones 5 & 6

### Selection and Site Requirements

#### Types of Roses

The genus Rosa has over 100 species and more than 20,000 different varieties. Some varieties are repeat or continuous bloomers and some are fragrant. The most popular categories include:

<i>Hybrid Tea</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large flowers generally fragrant on single or small cluster</li> <li>• 2-3 blooms per stem</li> </ul>
<i>Floribunda</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller flowers with multiple (3+) blooms per stem</li> </ul>
<i>Climber</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single or double flowers on long shoots</li> <li>• Require support</li> </ul>
<i>Miniature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flowers in clusters on small shrub</li> <li>• Average 15-60 cm in height</li> </ul>
<i>English</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross between modern and Old Garden roses</li> <li>• Noted for heavy fragrance and mostly double flowers</li> </ul>
<i>Shrub</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes roses not in other categories</li> <li>• Single or double flowers which bloom once or more per season</li> <li>• 1 metre + tall bushes</li> <li>• Canadian developed Parkland and Explorer roses are a good example of shrub roses which are extremely winter hardy</li> </ul>

#### Choosing Roses

Purchase roses from reputable growers and knowledgeable staff at garden centres. Roses grown locally in Canada are preferable over imports. Plants are available bare root or as potted plants. Bare root varieties are available from mail order nurseries and Big Box stores. Big Box plants are usually coated with wax to prevent desiccation. Choose plants that look healthy and are still dormant (buds remain closed). Avoid roses with long white coloured growth on stem. These roses have been “under stress” and may not perform as well once planted. Mail order nurseries offer a wide variety of roses. Roses are field dug, wrapped and then shipped directly to customer as bare root plants. Once received, soak bare root roses in water a minimum of one hour or overnight before planting. Try to plant within 24 hours of receipt. Potted plants should also be watered well before planting. In all cases, select disease-resistant rose varieties.





## Site and Soil Preparation

Choose a site that is both well drained and receives a minimum of 6 hours of direct sun. Morning sun is preferable to late afternoon sun. Make sure to choose a site that is both away from the roots of large trees and any building roof overhangs. Roses may also be grown in raised beds if surrounding conditions are unfavourable. Soil should be well drained. Compost, well rotted manure and peat moss can be added to improve moisture retentiveness, quality of soil, and also perform as mulch. Sulphur may be added to lower the pH level of an alkaline soil (Roses prefer a pH of 6.0-7.0). Bonemeal or superphosphate can be dug into the bed before planting time. Dig to a depth of 30 cm (12") and thoroughly mix the amendments into the soil.

## Planting

The best time to plant roses is spring and late fall when the weather is cool. Plant Hybrid Tea and Floribunda roses 18"– 24" (45 – 60 cm) apart and Shrub, Climber and Grandiflora roses 3 – 5 ft (90 – 150 cm) apart.

The planting hole preparation is the same for bare root and potted roses. Dig the hole deep enough so that the bud union will be located 2 in (5 cm) below ground level and wide enough so that the roots can be evenly spread out in the hole. A mound should be formed in the centre of the hole.

After soaking, trim off damaged roots, then spread the roots evenly over the mound. Backfill the hole  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with soil. Firm the soil in place around the roots with your foot. Fill the top portion of the hole with water to purge air pockets from around the roots. After the water soaks away, fill the hole with soil and mound soil up over the stems of the plant. For spring planted roses, leave the soil mounded for about 10 days. For fall planted roses, leave the soil mounded until spring.

When planting potted roses, try to disturb the roots as little as possible. For fibre pots, cut the bottom off the pot, and then cut down the side of the pot. Set the pot in the hole on top of the mound and remove the side.

For plastic pots, lay the pot on its side and gently slide the plant out of the pot and into the hole. Backfill the hole  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with soil. Complete the planting procedure the same as for bare root roses.

## Pruning

In spring just before bud break and after danger of frost (i.e. when the forsythia blooms), remove the soil mound from the canes. Prune canes that have winter killed, are damaged and diseased to live wood (white pith in the centre of the cane). The pruning cut should be made  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) above an outside bud at a 45 degree angle so that new growth will grow outwards from the plant. Most Hybrid Tea, Floribunda and Grandiflora roses will require a heavy pruning in spring. Shrub roses normally winter well so require only a light pruning. Climbing roses should be pruned in spring. During the blossoming period, deadhead spent flowers at the first outward strong true leaf (5 leaflets) to promote new flower growth. Do not deadhead if rose hips are desired.





## Watering

Roses like 2.5 cm (1") water per week. Supplemental watering may be needed if rainfall is insufficient. Avoid wetting the leaves, if possible. Watering early in the morning allows the leaves to dry and therefore helps prevent the spread of foliar diseases. A soaker hose or drip irrigation system is preferable to overhead sprinklers.

## Fertilizer

Chemical fertilizers are available in granular and liquid form. The most common fertilizer is a balanced 20-20-20 formulation. Organic fertilizers such as well rotted manure, fish emulsion, bloodmeal, bone meal, alfalfa pellets and compost can also be used. The first application should be applied just after spring pruning followed by regular applications at the manufacturers recommended rate. Do not over fertilize as this will injure the plants. Do not fertilize newly planted roses. The last fertilizer application should be made at the end of July so the growth will harden off before winter.

## Winter Protection

Non winter hardy roses such as Hybrid Tea, Floribunda and Grandiflora should be lightly pruned in late fall after a hard frost has killed any growth. Climbers should be anchored securely so they do not whip in the wind. After the ground is slightly frozen, hill-up the plants to 8 "– 12" (20 – 30 cm) with fresh soil or compost to protect the bud union from the winter freeze/thaw cycle. Do not pull the soil up from around the plant as this will disturb the roots. Special winterizing cones can also be used to cover the plants.

## Disease

The most common diseases of roses are powdery mildew, black spot and rust. The first step is to choose disease resistant varieties and to make sure roses are planted in the right place (see "Site and Soil Preparation"). In addition the following practices will help reduce disease:

- Clean up all debris from the ground and strip infected leaves off the plant.
- Clean up all fallen leaves in late fall and apply a dormant spray in spring before bud break.
- Use a coarse organic mulch such as wood chips.
- Keep roses well hydrated in summer to reduce stress.
- Note: In the past, baking soda sprays were recommended for black spot. There is new evidence that this kind of spray has little positive effect and can be toxic to plants. If disease persists, apply a fungicide with a Sulphur active ingredient at the manufacturer's recommended rate.

## Insects

The most common problem insects are aphids, Japanese beetles and worm larvae of sawflies, moths and butterflies. Inspect daily for insects. For aphids, use a strong spray from the garden hose to knock them off plants or apply insecticidal soap following the manufacturer's directions. Handpick Japanese beetles. Worms can be picked off or sprayed with an insecticidal soap solution.

[www.haltonmastergardener.ca](http://www.haltonmastergardener.ca)

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