

Roses and Their Care

Richard G. Obal, Monmouth County Agricultural Agent



Perfect Moment



Crimson Glory



Peace

Photos Courtesy of Richard Obal

Roses are the most popular of all garden flowers. They can be grown in all parts of New Jersey and are adapted to many decorative purposes. Members of the genus *Rosa* are classified as woody flowering shrubs. They are native to the Northern Hemisphere with over 150 species and thousands of named selections and hybrids available. The rose was probably first cultivated by the Chinese at least 500 years before the birth of Christ. The rose is our national flower.

Types of Roses

Hybrid Teas—Most popular of all roses, they range in height from 2 to 5 feet and are everblooming. The flowers are large single or double, with one flower per stem or in clusters of 3 to 5. Many are fragrant, and all types are excellent for cutting.

Floribundas—Flowers are smaller than hybrid teas but are borne in large clusters. Floribundas are an excellent landscape variety for a mass of color. They normally have few disease problems, and many varieties bloom continuously spring through fall.

Grandiflora—Plants are tall with blossoms borne singly or in small clusters. The flowers are smaller than hybrid teas but bloom more abundantly, and are good for cutting.

Modern Shrub Roses—These hybrids and selections of many rose types have a vigorous and dense growth habit that is suitable for landscape purposes. They are useful as hedges, screens, groundcovers, or specimen plantings, and are extremely hardy and disease resistant. Most are

repeat bloomers with minimal pruning requirements. Many types produce large, showy, fragrant flowers and colorful rose hips. Popular varieties include the Meidiland landscape roses, David Austin English roses, and rugosa roses and their hybrids.

Tree or Standard Roses—Grafted hybrid teas or floribundas on an upright trunk that are used as a formal or accent plant. These roses need special winter protection.

Climbing Roses—These include all varieties that produce long canes and require some sort of plant support. Ramblers are very vigorous and bloom only once. Flowers are produced in small clusters. Large-flowered, everblooming, and hybrid tea climbers are not as vigorous as ramblers, but normally have larger, better, formal blossoms that are borne over a longer period of time.

Miniature Roses—Small leaves and flowers are produced on a 12 to 24 inch plant. Extremely hardy and useful for beds, borders, containers, and hanging baskets, they require the same care as standard roses.

Buying Plants

Local garden centers, nurseries, and mail order rose specialists are the best source of roses. Bare root roses should be planted in early spring. The root system of bare root roses should be placed in lukewarm water for 12 hours to rehydrate roots before planting. Potted roses can be planted anytime, but spring is best. Select plants with the thickest, blemish-free canes.



Soil Preparation and Planting

Roses grow best in full sun. They will grow satisfactorily with at least 6 hours of sun. Floribundas, hybrid teas, and grandifloras should be placed 2 to 3 feet apart. Climbers and most shrub roses should be 4 to 8 feet apart. Any good, well-drained soil will support roses. Test your soil before planting and again every 3 to 4 years. On poor soil, add organic matter such as peat-moss, humus, compost, leaf mold, or composted manure. Spread a 2 to 4 inch layer on the soil surface and work deeply into soil. Add limestone as necessary so the pH is between 6.0 to 6.5 and, if needed, a source of phosphorus such as superphosphate or bone meal.

Planting holes should be 18 inches in diameter and 12 to 18 inches deep. The wider the better. The plants should be set so the bud union is one inch below the soil surface in north and central New Jersey, or placed at the soil level or just above in southern or costal New Jersey. Apply a 2 to 3 inch layer of mulch to conserve moisture and to control weeds.

General Culture

Roses require evenly moist soil. Deep watering once a week is very beneficial. Fertilize with a complete granular rose fertilizer (apply as directed for roses on the package) in early spring after new growth has started. Repeat later in growing season. Water soluble fertilizer can also be used at the rate and interval recommended on the package. Do not fertilize after early August. Check pH periodically and add lime as needed.

Pruning—Bush roses bloom on new wood. Prune in early spring when buds begin to swell. Completely cut out all dead, weak, diseased, and crossing canes. Reduce the size of the remaining canes by 25 to 50%. Make final cuts at a 45 to 60 degree angle, 1/4 inch above an outward-facing bud. Other than the removal of dead, weak, or crossing branches, most modern shrub roses require little or no pruning. To prevent the entrance of cane borers, cover pruning cuts with wax, white glue, pruning paint, or a thumbtack.

Roses that only bloom once, such as rambler or polyanthus roses, should be pruned after flowering.

Winter Protection—None is needed in southern New Jersey. In north and central New Jersey, mound 8 to 10 inches of soil around the plant base after a first killing frost. Remove mounded soil in early April. Climbers, shrub, and miniature roses generally do not require winter protection. Miniature roses grown in containers, however, should be protected.

For tree roses, wrap the head in hay or straw and cover with burlap. Cover the stem with tree wrap to prevent scald injury. Where temperatures regularly go below 0°F, cut roots on one side and dig a shallow trench on the opposite side. Lay the plant down and cover with soil for maximum winter protection.

Pest Control—Dust or spray with a registered fungicide from mid-May to the end of summer on disease-prone varieties. Treat for insects as needed. Current pest control recommendations for roses are available from your local Rutgers Cooperative Extension County Office.

Public Rose Gardens

Rudolf W. Van Der Goot Rose Garden
Colonial Park—Somerset County Parks
Mettlers Road (off of Amwell Road)
Somerset, New Jersey 08873

Brookdale Park Rose Garden
Watchung Avenue
Bloomfield, NJ 07703
973-268-3500

Davis Johnson Park and Lissemore Rose Garden
137 Engle Street
Tenafly, NJ 07670
201-569-7275

Further information and useful links can be found at the following web sites:

Rutgers Floriculture Home Page,
<http://aesop.rutgers.edu/~floriculture>

The American Rose Society,
<http://www.ars.org>

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Desktop publishing by Rutgers-Cook College Resource Center

Revised: September 2003

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE RESEARCH & EXTENSION
N.J. AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
NEW BRUNSWICK**

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