

# **Back to Basic Rose Care**

## **Lori Hilfer**

### **Select healthy plants**

Healthy grade #1 plants are more likely to provide a strong plant during one growing season compared to a grade # 1½ or # 2 rose.

### **Select a planting site carefully**

Select a site that gets a minimum of 4 hours of sunlight for miniatures and 6 hours for a large rose. Roses that get less sunlight will grow canes of smaller diameter and will not flower as often. Be sure that the rose is planted in a well-drained site. Excess moisture will increase risk of low oxygen to the roots and fungal disease.

### **Spacing of Plants**

Plant roses with a maximum space between bushes to provide maximum air flow. Space hybrid teas 30-36", floribundas 28" and miniatures 20" between plants. This will greatly increase air flow around the plant and diminish fungal infections.

### **Planting**

Use 1/3 good soil, 1/3 sphagnum peat moss and 1/3 sand (play or #2 course), some bone meal at bottom of the hole, and a good shovel to plant your rose bush. Make sure your hole is deep and wide enough. Don't plant a \$20 bush in a \$5 hole! If your rose has a bud union, in cold climate regions plant bud union 1-2 inches below the ground on a mound of soil mix. If you don't plant your bud union below ground, you will need to winter protect that bud union before winter. Roses should be in your garden for years. Failure to plant properly can result in an annual and not a perennial. Never fertilize your rose bush when planting.

### **Spring pruning**

Prune all rose types (except climbers) in early spring. This can be done when the forsythia bush blooms. Using pruning shears, cut back dead wood (canes or stems) until the pith (centers of the canes) are white. Shrubs are pruned only for shaping and need not see the white pith. Climbers are pruned after their first bloom to remove dead wood and to shape. Pruning climbers in the spring removes the flush of bloom!

### **Watering**

Roses enjoy about 1-2" of water per week. Invest in a rain gauge. If mother-nature falls short, water your roses. It is better to deep water once to promote a stronger, deeper root system than watering daily. Light watering results in shallow

roots. Water your roses early in the day to help prevent diseases like black spot. Use 2-3" layer of mulch to conserve water.

### **Summer pruning and/or deadheading**

Prune to an outside bud eye so that the next cane will grow outward. Pruning to an inside bud eye will decrease air flow and can encourage fungal disease.

Deadheading of blooms encourages the rose to re-bloom on a quicker cycle than leaving the spent flower on the cane. Do not deadhead flowers much past the end of August as the rose will expend energy trying to re-bloom when there isn't enough time for another bloom cycle. At the end of the rose blooming season, flowers not deadheaded will form rose hips signaling for the rose to stop blooming and begin dormancy.

### **Fertilizing**

Once a bush is established, roses love to eat. The old adage of "weakly weekly" can be applied to roses. Use water soluble or slow-release fertilizers. Roses do not know the difference between chemical or organic fertilizers! Never overfeed your roses more than the recommended dosage. More is not better. Do not feed your roses after the end of August as that will encourage growth before the onset of winter when the roses should be going into dormancy. Read the page on fertilizers and soil amendments.

### **To spray or not to spray...that is the question**

Read pages on low toxicity spray materials and pesticides and repellants. For those with a few roses and don't want to spray, try Bayer Advanced All-In-One Rose & Flower Care. This contains 3 systemic products in one –fertilizer, insect control and disease control. This product is applied with a bucket or watering can.

### **Late Fall Pruning**

Don't prune climbers. All other rose types should be pruned to waist height after several freezes. Trim tall canes to avoid wind damage. Tie canes together on large bushes is desired.

## **Disease Resistant Roses**

**Shrubs – Bull’s Eye, Home Run, Carefree Spirit, Distant Drums**

**Drift Series – Peach Drift and others**

**KnockOut – Rainbow**

**Eyeconic Roses – Eyeconic Lemonade Rose, Eyeconic Pink Lemonade Rose**

**Meidiland Roses – any of these**

**Easy Elegance Roses – Macy’s Pride, Snowdrift**

**Oso Easy Roses – Oso Easy Mango Salsa, Oso Easy Paprika**

**Vigorosa Roses – many varieties**

**Floribundas – Julia Child, Passionate Kisses, Moon Dance, Kordes Fairy Tales Series**

**Hybrid Teas – Gemini, Ronald Reagan, Papa Meiland**

**Grandifloras – Cherry Parfait, Wild Blue Yonder**

**Climbers – Altissimo, Cancan, Eden, Fourth of July, New Dawn, Polka**

**Websites that might be helpful in researching roses:**

[www.palatineroses.com](http://www.palatineroses.com)

[www.starrosesandplants.com](http://www.starrosesandplants.com)

[www.weeksroses.com](http://www.weeksroses.com)

[www.easyelegancerose.com](http://www.easyelegancerose.com)

[www.edmundsroses.com](http://www.edmundsroses.com)

[www.ars.org](http://www.ars.org) American Rose Society

**Contact your local rose society chapter:**

**Northeast Ohio Rose Society – Dalia Armonas,**

[jarmonas@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jarmonas@sbcglobal.net), 440-255-5184

## **Relatively low toxicity of spray materials**

The first general concept is to realize that everything is toxic. The dose dictates whether it is safe or toxic. Too much of any substance can cause adverse effects. Too much water is toxic to plants as they will lose oxygen in the soil. A non-toxic substance does not exist, it is just that the amount needed to cause the toxic effect is very large and exposure to that amount is relatively unlikely.

The second general concept is that everything natural is “safe” and anything that is a chemical is dangerous. Certain organic garden products must be used with a respirator as they can cause irritation and shortness of breath. Others must be used with goggles or they can cause eye damage.

Insecticidal soaps. These products contain fatty acids that are toxic to soft bodied insects (aphids). These agents are good for whiteflies as well. They must be applied when the temperature is below 85 degrees as it may burn the leaves. A respirator should be worn when applying.

Baking soda. Add 1TBSP/gallon of water. This works well for powdery mildew.

Oil. Add 1TBSP/gallon of water. The oil smothers fungal spores to minimize infection. The oil prevents the penetration of the spores into the leaf. Oil is effective for aphids and to some extent spider mites. This must be applied when it is cool as it can cause leaf burn.

Cinnamite. This is a derivative of cinnamon oil called cinnaldehyde. It is effective for spider mites.

E-RASE. This is a derivative of jojoba oil. The jojoba oil eradicates powdery mildew.

Water. Spray the underside of leaves with a strong jet of water to rinse off spider mites. A strong jet can also be used to rinse off aphids.

## INEXPENSIVE TIPS TO LESSEN DISEASE AND PESTS IN THE GARDEN

Obviously most rose growers are concerned about preventing diseases in their rosebeds. However, many people do not want to spend a lot of time and money to take care of their roses. Consulting rosarians are often asked: What to use to control disease in the a garden with just a couple roses? Below are a few tips to help the casual gardener enjoy their garden.

First, fungal diseases are difficult to eradicate once they develop in the garden. The best treatment is **prevention**. Although many people do not enjoy it, a regular spray program can greatly reduce the spread of disease in a garden. There are also several precautionary steps that can be done to reduce the onset of diseases in your garden. Roses need a regular spray program to control the spread of fungal infections. It is recommended that you spray 7-10 days throughout the growing season. This is necessary in order to control fungal infections.

There are some common household items that can be used to reduce pests in the garden. One common recipe requires liquid dish detergent, cooking oil and baking soda. I prefer lemon or orange scented liquid dish detergents as they leave a clean smell in the garden after application. Any brand of dish detergent works but it should not have ammonia as this may burn the leaves. The cooking oil can be corn, canola or safflower and again there is not much difference between brands that are used as part of this recipe. Finally, you want to use baking soda and it does not matter what brand you use as part of this recipe. The recipe is to mix 1 TBSP each of cooking oil, baking soda and dish detergent to 1 gallon of water. Shake thoroughly as the oil will not mix with the water similar to Italian dressing. Spray the entire bush with this mixture using your regular sprayer. Be sure to spray the top and bottom underside of the leaves. It is thought that the oil acts to control the insects, such as aphids or spider mites, by smothering them. The soap also is beneficial in controlling insects. The baking soda changes the pH of mixture and is beneficial in controlling powdery mildew. The cooking oil also acts as a fungicide since the oil layer prevents the fungal mycelium from penetrating into the leaf tissue.

An inexpensive method to control aphids is a jet of water. Spray the tips of affected plants with a strong jet of water to dislodge the aphids. This also helps remove the sugary residue left on the plants from the aphids.

An inexpensive method to reduce deer damage is to hang bars of soap about 3 feet above the ground. Attach blocks of scented soap bars with fishing line. Some detergents that may work are Irish Spring or Zest, which have a strong fragrance. Soap has been reported to have some success in deterring deer. Some people have had success spraying milk on their rose leaves. It is thought to give off a scent unpleasant to the deer and acts as a repellent to deer grazing on your roses. Another option is to make a garlic spray or purchase a commercial brand of Garlic Barrier. You will need to add 12 cloves (about 3 full garlic heads) to 1 pint of water. Mix in blender until smooth, add 1 pint boiling water, let sit overnight and strain through cheesecloth. Add 4 oz. garlic water plus 1 TBSP dish detergent and 1 TBSP of cooking oil to make 1 gallon

of spray. Thought to repel insects, deer and lower fungal growth. Must be reapplied every 2 weeks. Garlic odor dissipates after a couple of hours.

## **Organic Rose Gardening Fertilizers and Soil Amendments**

**Guanos and Manure** (releases nutrients as bacteria break them down; N-P-K)

Bat (4-13-1)

Chicken (1.1-0.8-0.5)

Cow (0.25-0.15-0.25)

Horse (0.7-0.3-0.6)

Llama (1.5-0.2-1.1)

Mushroom Compost – (0.7-0.3-0.3); composted horse/chicken manure soil amendment; low nutrient value; may be “enriched” with a variety of products; may have a high soluble salt content.

### **Meals**

Alfalfa – (3-2-2) Triacantanol; amino acids, some trace elements

Blood – 13% Nitrogen, some iron

Bone – (steamed – 1-13-0); some calcium, some trace minerals

Cottonseed – (6-1-1); good source of nitrogen; may acidify soil

Crab – (5-2-0.5); slow release nitrogen from chitin (protein)

Feather – (12-0-0) slow release nitrogen

Kelp – contains many trace elements

### **Soil Amendments**

Chelated iron – corrects iron deficiency

Epson salts – magnesium sulfate; corrects magnesium deficiency

Greensand – an iron and potassium silicate; good for immediate release of potassium

Gypsum – source of calcium and breaks up clay soils

Rock Phosphate – phosphate (3-8% available; 30% total); calcium (48% CaO)

Sul-Po-Mag – (0-0-22); good source of potassium (22%); sulfur (23%); magnesium (11%)

### **Other**

Fish emulsion – (5-1-1); enhances microbial activity, 19 trace elements and 11 vitamins

Yuccah extract- enhances microbial activity

**Organic Rose Gardening  
Pesticides and Repellants  
EPA Classification; Danger (D); Warning (W); Caution (C)**

**Anthracnose**

Bordeaux mixture (D)  
Copper solution (C)  
Lime sulfur (D)

**Blackspot**

Bordeaux mixture (D)  
Copper solution (C)  
Lime sulfur (D)  
Ultrafine Oil (C)

**Powdery Mildew**

Baking soda (C)  
Bordeaux mixture (D)  
Cinnamite (C)  
Copper solution (C)  
E-RASE (jojoba oil)  
Green Cure (potassium bicarbonate) (C)  
Lime Sulfur (D)  
Remedy (potassium bicarbonate) (C)  
Ultrafine Oil (C)

**Downy Mildew**

Bordeaux mixture (D)  
Copper solution (C)

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**Insecticides**

Diatomaceous earth (C)  
Dipel (bacillus thuringiensis – Bt)  
Garlic barrier (fluid garlic concentrate)  
Hot Pepper Wax (capsaicin)  
Milky spore  
Neem oil (C)  
Rotenone – pyrethrins (C)  
Sabadella dust  
Sharp Shooter insecticide (lemon juice components)  
Tobacco dust (nicotine)  
Ultrafine oil (C)  
Water (C)

**Miticides**

Cinnamite (C)  
Garlic barrier  
Hot Pepper Wax (capsaicin)  
Lime sulfur (D)  
Neem oil (C)  
Rotenone – pyrethrins (C)  
Sharp Shooter insecticide  
Ultrafine oil (C)  
Water (C)

**Slugs**

Beer

**Deer**

Bobbex  
Deer Off  
Liquid Fence

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