

HANK JENKINS, in association with the
Western New York Rose Society

Presents

HOW TO GROW ROSES IN WESTERN NEW YORK

SELECTING YOUR ROSE BUSH

Always choose the best specimen available. Your rose should have at least 3 canes coming from the bud union and these canes should be at least 3/8" in diameter. Bagged roses should be vibrant and fresh with the buds swelling on the canes. Any white growth from the canes should be removed prior to planting. Beware of canes that appear shriveled. Boxed and potted roses should be disease free and well watered.

PLANTING YOUR ROSES

Select a location away from tree roots, where the sun light hits directly at least 6 hours a day, (4 hours is the bare minimum). The site should be well drained with raised beds being preferred.

- A. Dig a hole 12" to 15" deep and 15" to 18" across. Check drainage by filling with water and timing the drain time. If it takes longer than 1-2 hours, dig elsewhere with better drainage.
- B. Mix a 5-gallon bucket full of organic matter with the soil taken from the hole. Add to this, and mix, 1/2 cup of bone-meal. For organic matter use compost, if available, or moist peat moss.
- C. If your rose is bare root, soak the rose in water for 2-4 hours. Overnight soaking is OK. If your rose is boxed or potted, carefully cut the container away and remove the plant and root ball. The existing root ball should be kept intact as much as possible. If there are any roots encircling the pot, gently loosen these. This will encourage rooting in the new hole.
- D. Plant your rose bush with the bud union even with, or slightly below, ground level. It will sink in time. Fill the hole half full of the amended soil mix and water well (3 to 5 gallons of water). This will settle the soil and remove air pockets. **DO NOT STEP IN THE HOLE!** This will compact the soil and break the rose roots. After the water drains, add the rest of the soil mix to the hole and mound it up over the canes of the rose.
- E. When new growth is seen, wash the soil mound away, gently, exposing the rose canes. This will take from 2 to 4 weeks. Be patient.

HOW FAR APART SHOULD I PLANT MY ROSE?

HYBRID TEAS - 18" to 24" apart

GRANDIFLORAS - 18" to 30" apart

FLORIBUNDAS - 15" to 24" apart

CLIMBERS - 48" to 60" and 12" to 15" away from their support

MINIATURES - 12" to 18" apart

SHRUB ROSES - 36" to 48" apart

ENGLISH ROSES - 36" to 48" apart

PRUNING YOUR ROSES

Pruning will control the size and shape of rose bushes and keep repeat blooming roses blooming all summer.

- A. Common sense dictates all pruning. Prune your plants in the spring ONLY, NOT in the fall. Use bypass pruning shears and make sure they are clean and sharp. Cut out all dead wood and all twiggy growth. Cut back to live wood just 1/4" above an outward facing eye and cut at a 45-degree angle.
- B. Remove all faded blooms promptly, cutting 1/4" above a 5 or 7 leaflet cluster. On first year roses, DO NOT cut long stems. These new roses need all the leaves they can keep to grow strong. Anything growing from BELOW the bud union MUST be removed. These are suckers and are not beneficial.

- C. Climbing roses and Old-Garden roses generally bloom once per year and should be pruned only AFTER they bloom. It is best NOT to prune climbers for the first 2 to 3 years they are in your garden. This gives you a chance to determine their growth habit.
- D. In our area, prune your roses only during, or after, the time the forsythias are in bloom.
- E. Obviously, dead canes may carefully be removed at any time of the year.

WATERING YOUR ROSES

Consistent watering is the key to good roses.

- A. Water is the vehicle that brings nutrients to your roses.
- B. Weekly watering is necessary in order to provide 1" of water per week to your roses. If you have very sandy soil, you need more water; clay soils need less water.
- C. Overhead watering is OK if done early in the day. This enables the leaves to dry before nightfall.
- D. Rain gauges are helpful accessories to check rainfall.

FEEDING YOUR ROSES

Roses are heavy feeders and love snacks, too!

- A. Roses are living things and need a constant food supply to flourish.
- B. ALWAYS water the roses thoroughly before and after feeding roses. NEVER fertilize in a dry rose bed.
- C. Fertilize on a regular schedule. First feeding should be in the spring immediately following your spring pruning. Use 5-10-5 at the rate of 1 cup per established rose bush or a rose food according to package directions. Scratch this fertilizer into the top 1" to 2" of the soil. Keep the fertilizer off the canes and bud union. If using an organic fertilizer mix, 1 to 2 cups of a balanced organic mix can be scratched into the soil between the bud union and the outer drip edge. If the bush is well established and large, more organic mix can be used. WATER WELL AFTER FERTILIZING.
- D. When your roses have buds the size of split peas; they would love a snack. If you are in the mood for a nosh, give each rose bush 1 gallon of liquid fertilizer, either tea brewed from alfalfa or chemical/organic fertilizer diluted per manufacturer's directions (Miracle Grow, liquid seaweed, Bloom Booster, etc..). There are many fine liquid fertilizers on the market. Make your choice.
- E. After the first bloom cycle (around July 5-10), fertilize with solid fertilizer again. Around August 15-20, do the liquid fertilizer thing again. DO NOT add fertilizers to your roses after September 1. This will prompt new growth that will not harden off sufficiently before winter and will die back.
- F. Each year in the spring, it is good practice to add 1" of compost to the top of every rose bed, carefully working it into the soil.

MULCHING YOUR ROSES

Mulch conserves water and helps to keep down weed growth.

- A. Mulching is one of the most useful practices for growing healthy roses. A 2" to 4" layer of organic mulch helps keep soil moist and loose, and weed growth to a minimum.
- B. Apply mulch in the spring after soil warms and before the weeds start to grow. If weed growth has started, remove the weeds and loosen the soil. Mulch can also be applied anytime during the growing season when the bed is weed free and cultivated.
- C. It is recommended to apply a liquid fertilizer 7 to 10 days after mulch is applied because some mulches drain nitrogen from the soil.
- D. Some good mulches for our area include cypress mulch, pine bark mulch, cocoa shell mulch and well rotted manures. Some people also use shredded pallets for mulch.

GENERAL GARDEN UPKEEP

Do this throughout the season and keep your roses in bloom all year.

- A. Keep your garden clean. If you have the time and a good back, after July 4th remove the leaves from the bottom 6" of each cane on your roses. This makes it harder for insects and diseases to infect your roses.
- B. Always remove spent blooms and suckers from your roses.
- C. Always leave at least 2 or 3 five-leaflet leaves on the stem when cutting a bloom. This encourages strong stems and repeat blooms. The bud-eye at the cut should face away from the center of the plant.
- D. Finger prune when more than one bud grows from an eye. Many times there will be two or three growing from a single eye. Finger pruning means rubbing off the weaker growths.
- E. Remove any shoots that don't have a bud at the end. Don't be too hasty in this step.
- F. All of these things will encourage stronger, thicker stems and more and better blooms.

FALL CARE OF YOUR ROSES

- A. Stop fertilizing on Labor Day
- B. Continue spraying your roses until the first hard frost.
- C. Continue watering, just not as often. Roses need to be well hydrated going into winter.
- D. If you have poorly growing plants, dig them up in early November, prune all dead wood from the bud union and prune remaining canes until they are no more than 12" long. Replant these roses in a different spot in the garden (plant as you would in the spring).

SPRAYING YOUR ROSES

Spraying your roses is necessary, and a regular schedule should be followed. Every 10 to 14 days works in this area.

- A. Apply the spray material in the early morning or late evening. Do not spray during the heat of the day.
- B. ALWAYS FOLLOW THE LABEL DIRECTIONS!!
- C. The top and bottom of all leaves should be evenly covered with spray for best efficiency. Try not to mix more spray material than you need.
- D. Protect yourself when spraying. Wear safety goggles and plastic or rubber gloves when mixing and spraying. Try not to get spray on yourself. Shower after spraying your roses. Do not drink or smoke while spraying.
- E. To protect yourself, your family, pets and the environment, always study the label and follow directions before mixing or applying any spray material.

ROSE PROBLEMS

Problems in rose growing are found in an inverse proportion to the prevention of them. In other words, an ounce of prevention is worth 10 pounds of cure.

- A. Bad drainage, too little water, poor soil, insects and diseases are all preventable and/or curable with good care of your roses.
- B. Avoid watering in the evening. When diseases are present, water the ground and not the leaves. This avoids spreading diseases.
- C. Keep the center of your roses clear of crossing branches. This improves air circulation and prevents chafing of branches.
- C. Keep on your toes. Spray your roses immediately at the first sign of disease or insects.
- D. Healthy plants produce more and live longer than weak plants.

ROSE DISEASES AND INSECTS

To help prevent and treat problems with rose diseases and insects, see the tables of fungicides and insecticides provided on this "Growing Roses in WNY" webpage.

ROSE DISEASES

BLACKSPOT - A common problem with roses, it is a fungus disease that causes black spots on the foliage that cause the leaves to turn yellow and fall off. Roses must be sprayed or BLACKSPOT will be serious by mid summer. BLACKSPOT can not be cured, only prevented. It is important to remove any infected leaves from the plant and the garden. Throw them in the garbage, not the compost pile. Spray with a recommended fungicide following label directions for BLACKSPOT control.

POWDERY MILDEW – Mildew is also a fungus. It grows over the upper leaf surface and is easily identified by the white powdery blotches it forms. Severely infected leaves become brittle, wither and die. Infected stem tissue has a withered and spindly appearance and is covered with white powdery blotches. POWDERY MILDEW loves warm days and cool, dewy nights.

ROSE INSECTS

APHIDS – Aphids are brown or green insects that cluster on new and tender growth and suck plant juices. That causes stunted growth and deformation. They generally appear in early spring and summer.

RED SPIDER MITES – Minute pests that suck plant juices from the underside of the leaves. This turns the leaves reddish-brown and dry. They love hot, dry weather and multiply like mad. Use your garden hose and a forceful spray on the underside of the leaves daily for 7 days when you see RED SPIDER MITES or their evidence. This will interrupt their breeding cycle.

THRIPS – Thrip is a very tiny insect that is found in the base of the flower bloom. It leaves the bloom speckled and deformed. They appear in late June and stay the rest of the year. Cut off and dispose of the affected blooms.

JAPANESE BEETLES – Green and bronze, 3/8" flying beetle that makes its first appearance in the Erie-Niagara-Chautauqua counties in the beginning of July. They are initially attracted to light colored, fragrant rose blooms, but will eat anything when hungry, even privet hedges. They stay till the second half of August. The warmer the temperature, the more active these beetles are. They chew flowers, leaves and stems. Looks like holes have been drilled in the bloom after they've been there. The leaves look lacy after the beetles have fed on them. Pick the beetles off and squash them, or knock them off the plant into a can of oil or sudsy water. Using a beetle trap only attracts them to the area.

ROSE MIDGE – Suck the juices from the new buds turning the stem tips black, shriveled dry and burnt in appearance. MUST be prevented.