

Growing Roses for 1 Year



Keeping a record of what you do in your rose garden will help you throughout the year. Mark a calendar when you prune, spray fungicide, fertilize, plant, transplant etc. These are all things that you will want to know later on in the year. Take note of how well each variety grows. And don't forget to identify your rose bushes with a plant marker. The following suggestions generally apply to hybrid teas, floribundas, shrubs and miniature roses. Old garden roses will not need as much attention to the pruning.

January – Most nurseries get their potted roses at the end of the month. Good month to plant new roses. Also, good time to transplant a rose from one location to another. Good month to apply organic fertilizers to established bushes. Some good examples of organic fertilizers are alfalfa meal, alfalfa pellets (rabbit food), milorganite, fish meal, worm castings (poop), Epsom salts. See fertilizer page for more info.

February – do major pruning to established bushes in mid Feb. In South Louisiana think about Valentine's Day through early March. Plant new bushes or transplant a bush to a new location. Apply 1 cup organic fertilizer to the bottom of the planting hole and 1 cup to the top after back filling. Water well. Begin your fungicide spray program if you plan to spray regularly to combat blackspot. Prevention is better than trying to cure.

March – You should have a lot of new growth (leaves) & basal breaks on your roses now. Take off some of the new growth in the center so that stems will not cross or rub each other as they grow. You can do this by simply rubbing off the tender growth with your thumb. Water regularly about 1 inch a week if there's no rain. If necessary add a couple of inches of fresh mulch on top of old to hold in moisture and help prevent weeds.

April - Your roses will start blooming this month. Continue to water regularly if no rain. Apply slow release fertilizer such as Osmocote if desired or apply a water soluble such as Miracle Gro after the first bloom cycle.

May – Your roses will continue to bloom this month. Deadheading will encourage quicker reblooming. Warm weather may have started so continue to water regularly. Maintaining a moist bed is best as weather heats up.

June – Deadhead for more blooms and continue to water...2 inches a week if no rain. Consider mixing up a batch of water soluble fertilizer in a 5 gallon bucket of water... 1/2 tablespoon per gallon. Pour about 3/4 - 1 gallon around each bush drip line. This will treat about 5-6 bushes. Water well before and afterwards.

July – continue to water regularly...possibly 2 times during the week depending on the temperature. Roses in pots will probably need to be watered every day because of the intense heat. Some afternoon shade would be good for them.

August – mid August to early Sept. prune about 1/3 off the height of the bush to get them ready for fall blooming. Continue to water. Fertilize again with organics. Slow release Osmocote type fertilizer can be applied but is not necessary. Always water before and afterwards.

September – there should be a lot of new growth and even some blooms. Continue to water regularly.

October – You should have some nice blooms now. This is a good month to start planning new rose beds for those potted roses you never planted or for the new roses coming out in Jan.

November – More blooms coming this month. Good time to build a new bed to plant more bushes.

December – We could have good weather through December and you could have blooms.

Check your bushes often throughout the growing season. You can catch problems such as drying soil, worms & caterpillars, spider mites & thrips before they get out of hand!

****Potted roses may be planted in the ground or in raised beds any month of the year. If the weather is warm when you plant, water every day for a week or so. Make sure the soil drains well.**

Rose Growing Tips

- There is a rose for everyone.
- Why do you want to grow roses? Landscape, bouquets, share, competition.
- How much time are you willing to devote?
- If you are new to rose growing choose “disease resistant” varieties - “disease resistant” does not mean “disease free”. There are many varieties that are very disease resistant and are easy to care for.
- If the rose name has the word “Carefree” in it that doesn’t mean you don’t have to care for it. “Knock Out” roses don’t prune & feed themselves! Caring for your roses should be fun and enjoyable. They will give back in blooms what you have put into them.
- Start small and don’t buy more bushes than you have time to take care of.
- Raised beds are best...don’t build close to trees. Tree roots can reach your beds. Large pots are also good.
- In-ground beds must have good, well draining soil away from trees (shade/roots).

Roses Need:

- 6-8 hours full sun daily. A few varieties can grow and bloom well on less than 6 hours.
- Good, well draining soil - rose roots cannot sit in water. Water regularly and deeply - early in the day is best because the bush can utilize the water throughout the day.
- Prune twice a year...heavy in February and light in August for a well shaped bush and dead-head often for more blooms.
- Fertilize at least 2-3 times a year– always water well before and after fertilizing (after a good rain). There are lots of organic choices or man-made.
- Mulch with 3 - 4 inches - keeps moisture in, soil cooler, keeps weeds down, avoids splash-up, looks nice. Some good mulches are pine needles, leaves - whole or chopped, pine bark, cypress bark

Lastly, join the Acadiana Rose Society. Hear knowledgeable speaker, get hands-on experience, learn rose culture, meet new friends and have fun!

Check out our district website under Resources

Fertilizing

Roses will respond tremendously with regular fertilizing. There are many fertilizers you can use. There are basically 2 choices: inorganic (chemical/synthetic) and organic.

Some inorganic choices are powder-like water solubles such as Miracle Gro, slow release encapsulated types such as Osmocote, granular types such as Shake n Feed by Miracle Gro and also a liquid concentrate. The water soluble types are easy to mix with water and pour around your plants. Slow release is just what it says. They are released into the soil at a slow rate of speed depending on how much water/rain they get. Slow release can be applied 1 or 2 times a year and can last a few months or longer. Regardless of what you use, always follow package directions.

Organic fertilizers can come from organics such as aged manure, blood meal, cottonseed meal, feather meal, crab meal, alfalfa or others, as opposed to chemical/synthetic sources. They are good for the plant and good for the soil. Organic fertilizers depend on the microbes in the soil to break them down for the plants to use and tend to encourage soil microbes and earthworms. These are usually applied 2 or 3 times a year starting in February. Some good organic choices are alfalfa pellets (rabbit food), Epsom salts, milorganite, worm castings (poop), fish meal, fish emulsion, blood meal and bone meal. You can add these directly to the soil and work it in. Ready to use complete organic fertilizers such as Mills Magic Mix & MicroLife are already mixed and available at local retailers or by ordering online.

Coffee grounds, crushed egg shells & chopped banana peels can also be added directly to your soil to add nutrients.

Brew some tea... Fill a 5 gallon bucket with about 4 - 4 1/2 gallons water and add 1 1/2 cups of alfalfa pellets (rabbit food) and stir. Cover loosely with a lid. Stir once a day for 3-4 days. Contents will get foamy and have a barnyard smell. Add 2-3 tablespoons each of Epsom salts and water soluble Miracle Gro fertilizer. Stir well and pour 1/2 gallon or so around the drip line of standard roses. This will feed about 5 roses. Make sure your roses are well watered before fertilizing.

Diseases/Pests

Blackspot is the most common disease of roses. There are varying degrees of how much a bush is affected from being a "blackspot magnet" to almost totally immune to it. Many old garden roses are naturally very resistant to blackspot. Rose hybridizers have been very successful over the last 20 years creating roses that are extremely resistant to blackspot. Namely, the Kordes and Meilland families of roses have released many extremely healthy varieties that do not require fungicide spraying. Bill Radler, creator of the 'Knock Out' rose, is also dedicated to creating disease resistant roses. Go online and look up EarthKind Roses. There are 21 varieties thoroughly tested to be tough and easy to grow.

Many gardeners do not want to spray chemicals but want roses without disease. Now more than ever there are a lot of excellent, healthy varieties of roses to choose from.

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Every garden has bugs. Some are good and some are bad. Learn which is which. Let the good bugs take care of the bad bugs. Don't indiscriminately spray insecticides. Spray only if you have a infestation or severe outbreak. The "thumb and forefinger squish" method works good. If you must spray try using a product that is easy on the environment. Products containing spinosad as the active ingredient are easy on good bugs and the environment. There are other safe and organic products on the market and available at garden centers and big box stores as well as homemade remedies.