

MEL'S

where home and garden come together

ROSES

BASIC TECHNIQUES FOR PLANTING, PRUNING, DISEASE AND PEST CONTROL

The rose is an extremely hardy, easy to grow, flowering shrub if properly selected, well planted and cared for. They are prolific bloomers from June to early November, providing intense color and continuous season long pleasure. Mel's rose selection includes several varieties from species to hybrid teas to English roses. We carry only those varieties which are proven performers in our region.

BEFORE YOU PLANT

BARE ROOT ROSES should have any broken roots pruned back and the entire root ball soaked in tepid water for at least 12 to 24 hours before you plant.

POTTED ROSES should have the tangled mass of feeder roots gently loosened from the soil ball. If the mass is pot bound, score it with a sharp knife, then spread gently apart. If this step is not taken, your roses may not perform as well or even perish.

PREPARING THE SOIL & PLANTING

LOCATION for the planting of roses is very important. You should pick a spot that receives full sun – actually, the more sun, the better. Avoid planting too close together to insure good air circulation and to help prevent disease. Avoid planting near competing tree roots.

PLANT the rose in a hole twice as wide as the root ball and deep enough so the graft of the bud union at the base of the plant is still above ground level after backfilling. Amend the soil by combining compost, aged manure or peat moss (up to 1/3 of soil volume) to soil taken from the hole. We also carry a variety of commercial mixes specially formulated for roses. Add some transplant fertilizer, or bone meal to the soil to stimulate root growth.

Roses in biodegradable fiber pots should be planted, container and all, directly into the prepared hole. Score the pots 3-4 times up the side of the container

and place in the hole with the graft above ground level. Backfill about 2/3 full of the prepared soil mixture, tamp down, fill the hole with water and allow to drain. Finish backfilling the hole using the same procedure. Remove the top rim of the pot if it's visible above ground level.

Roses in pulp or plastic pots should be carefully removed from the container, disturbing the root ball as little as possible and then planted as described above.

FERTILIZING & WATERING

FERTILIZE newly planted roses every 3-4 weeks using a maintenance fertilizer such as "Miracle Grow", being careful to read and follow the label directions.. Roses are heavy feeders, so to maximize blooms, feeding should be done on a regular basis. On newly planted roses, you should start fertilizing about a month after initial planting. For established roses, regular monthly feeding with a rose fertilizer is recommended from April through August. Or use Bayer Advanced Garden Rose and Flower Care which feeds and protects against insects for up to 6 weeks.

WATER roses with a transplant solution immediately after planting. Mel's recommends Bonide Root & Grow water soluble transplant fertilizer. Make sure you water newly planted roses twice a week the first season and then once or twice a week thereafter, depending on your soil condition. Deep watering for regular soil once a week is sufficient. Water more often for sandy soil and less often for heavy soil. Try to avoid overhead watering as this can cause disease and also to protect the blossoms.

PEST CONTROL is an essential element to help prevent insect and disease problems. Good sanitation, cultural conditions and selecting resistant rose varieties are the best way to accomplish this. Talk with Mel's nursery staff for an accurate diagnosis and suggestions for pest control.

AUTUMN CARE

Rake up fallen leaves in November and pick off any leaves that don't fall off before March. Foliage diseases in modern roses are best controlled by using fungicides as a preventative measure. Some diseases can "overwinter" on leaves. Apply a lime-sulfur (dormant) spray to control any remaining "overwintering" diseases from December through March. If the foliage disease symptoms continue to appear, take steps to immediately apply a fungicide as it is crucial to prevent the spread of the disease. Avoid planting disease-prone varieties by checking with Mel's nursery staff for suggestions regarding those that are disease resistant. Aphids are common on new growth and easily controlled with a strong blast of water and an application of insecticidal soap.

WINTERCARE

Winter protection is needed. MULCH roses with organic material in anticipation of freezing temperatures in winter. Mel's recommends adding mulch in late autumn. The mulch should be mounded 8-10 inches deep over the crown of the plant. Remove the mulch in early March.

Tree roses should be completely wrapped from the ground up to the graft union at the top of the plant. Mel's suggests surrounding the plant with wire fencing or chicken wire, forming a 15-inch diameter circle around the plant from the ground to just above the top graft union. Fill the inside of the fence with straw, making certain the graft union has at least 2-3 inches of straw around it. Remove the fencing and straw in early March.

PRUNING

ANNUAL PRUNING should be done in March using the following basic pruning principles for all roses. Remove all dead, damaged and diseased branches. Always prune to 1/4" above an outward facing bud. During the summer, remove faded flowers by cutting back to the first 5-leaflet leaf below the flower. A good rule to remember is when pruning roses, leave no wood on the bush that is thinner than a pencil. To help produce more abundant blooms, remove any twiggy, weak or dead wood.

LIGHT PRUNING with bushes that are left tall makes next season's bloom short-stemmed but profuse.

MODERATE PRUNING is described as leaving five to ten 1-4 foot long canes per bush. Generally about half of each cane is pruned back, which produces a nice display of bloom with some long-stemmed.

SEVERE PRUNING is described as leaving only four canes per bush, each cut shorter than one foot long. This provides the best winter freeze protection and produces the longest-stemmed blooms.

Modern roses (hybrid tea, floribunda and miniature) should be pruned in early March. Try to avoid the temptation to prune earlier even if new growth is emerging. Remove all weak, spindly and crossing branches. Leave only the most vigorous five to seven main canes, cutting these back to 18".

Climbing roses usually flower June through November on previous year's growth. In March, prune back to 6" any lateral (side) branches that flowered the previous year. Remove any old canes that are no longer producing.

Shrub, species and old garden roses, depending on the variety or species, can bloom repeatedly or just once a year. Each year in March, remove a few old canes to rejuvenate growth. Those that only flower once a year do so on wood from the previous year's growth and should be pruned back immediately after flowering.

MILDEW, BLACK SPOT, RUST & APHID CONTROL USING A NON-TOXIC SOLUTION of 1 tablespoon baking soda and 1 tablespoon ultra-fine spray oil or spreader sticker in 1 gallon of water has been proven effective in eliminating diseased leaves. Remove and destroy all affected leaves, being careful not to compost or recycle diseased leaves.

FUNGICIDES will not cure affected leaves but can be used on unaffected leaves to help prevent mildew, black spot and rust from spreading.

INSECTICIDAL SOAPS listed as safe for roses may be used to control aphids. Follow label directions carefully.

CHEMICAL INSECTICIDES listed for aphids on roses are available, but if using Bayer Rose and Flower Care fertilizer with systemic action, they are usually not needed.