

Growing an “easy care” rose garden need not be a daunting experience. It begins with selecting rose varieties that are hardy in our climate, require less water and fertilizer, and have above-average disease resistance. Select a rose that displays the color, fragrance and size characteristics suited to your garden location. Look for roses grown on their own roots for maximum hardiness and ease of care. Many modern roses are grafted, which means that the desired flowering stem is attached to the root stock of a different rose variety. Grafted roses are less hardy than roses growing on their own roots.

As more consumers ask for roses that do not need pesticide sprays, rose hybridizers have responded by focusing their attention on disease resistance. This has also become a successful marketing tool, so look for statements regarding disease resistance on the nursery tags and let that guide your selection process. The following rose hybridizers are known for creating roses with better than average disease resistance. Most rose catalogs and nursery tags include the hybridizer name in the rose description.

- **Outstanding Rose Series** - Griffith Buck Series, Canadian Explorer Series, Meidiland Series, Easy Elegance Series, Drift Series, Fairy Tale Series— Roses in these series have been bred for outstanding easy-care characteristics.
- **Earth Kind Roses** - Texas A&M University has done extensive research. For information on this research project visit: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkindroses/> Some of the Earth Kind Roses recommended for the Kansas City area include: Belinda’s Dream, Carefree Beauty, Else Poulsen, La Marne, Marie Daley, New Dawn, Sea Foam, Perle ‘d Or and The Fairy.
- **European Rose Hybridizers** - Due to the stricter regulations on pesticides in most European countries, many disease resistant roses have been developed. Look for roses hybridized by: Harkness, Poulsen, Kordes and Meiland. David Austin roses from Britain are very popular but they vary widely in their level of disease resistance. Newer roses from Austin have been bred with increased attention to disease resistance.
- **American Garden Rose Selections** – Recognizes roses that are easy care, disease resistant and suitable for different regions of the country: American Garden Rose Selections for our area include: Thomas Affleck, Phloxy Baby, Faith Whittlesey, Icecap and Peachy Keen Rose.
- **Climbing Roses** - Easy care varieties proven in our area include: Dortmund, Dublin Bay, Eden, Fourth of July, John Davis, Pinkie, Rambling Red, Royal Sunset, William Baffin and Westerland.
- **Old Garden Roses** - Include varieties hardy in our area: Alba, Bourbon, Hybrid Perpetual, Polyantha, Portland and Rugosa. These historic roses are again becoming popular because they don’t require the extensive care of more recently developed hybrid varieties.

Other Varieties with Superior Performance – Here are a few locally popular varieties: Ballerina, Bonica, Chuckles, Country Dancer, Home Run, Iceberg, Livin’ Easy, Polonaise, Summer Wind, Alba Meidiland, Cinco de Mayo, Conundrum, Day Breaker, Europeana, Sexy Remy, Sweet Diana, Walking on Sunshine, Sunshine Daydream, Oso Easy ‘Paprika’, Easy Does It and Fairy Tale.

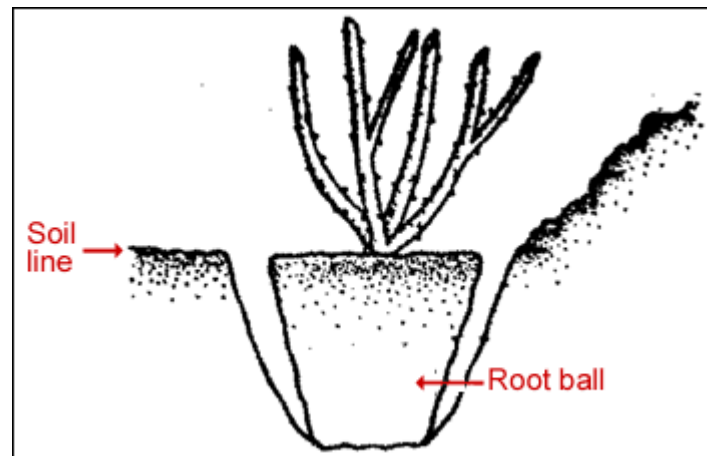
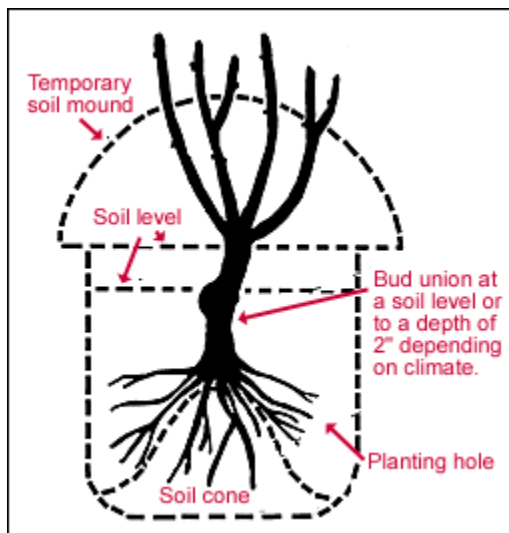
As a general rule of thumb, most hybrid tea and grandiflora roses are bred with an emphasis on the form and beauty of the flower rather than ease of care and disease resistance. Floribunda roses vary widely in their disease resistance, so read the plant description carefully. Modern shrub roses are usually the best option for easy care. But, ALWAYS read the tag!

Site Selection and Planting

Location Roses require ample sunlight, water and air circulation to do their best. Choose a location that receives at least six hours of sunlight daily.

Preparation Plants may be purchased either bare-root or potted. Immerse bare-root roses in lukewarm water for 12 to 24 hours prior to planting to ensure they are properly hydrated. Inspect the roots and branches and prune away any broken or damaged tissue. Potted plants should be watered thoroughly prior to planting.

Planting time Bare-root roses can be planted when the soil is warm enough to work early April through May. Container grown roses should be planted after May 1.



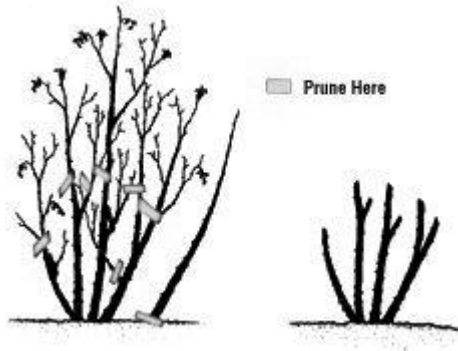
Potted Roses

Bare-Root Roses

- Planting**
1. When planting bare-root roses, dig a hole large enough to let the roots spread out without crowding or curving around the wall of the hole and allow some space for growth. A normal size hole would be about 18" by 18" with a firm mound of soil at the bottom. The roots should be spread over the mound of soil with the bud union located 1 to 2 inches below the soil level depending on climate. Partially fill the hole with soil, then firm the soil around the roots and water in. Fill the remainder of the with soil, firm it and water in. To prevent desiccation the new dormant plant should have a temporary soil mound until the first leaves appear.
 2. For potted roses, dig the hole three times wider than the container and the same depth as the soil level in the container. Place the rose in the center of the hole on solid undisturbed soil so the plant will not settle below soil surface level. Use the soil removed from the planting hole for backfill and water in.
 3. *Water every 4-5 days for two weeks.*
 4. Place 2 to 3 inches of organic mulch around the base of the plant to suppress weeds, maintain stable soil temperature and moisture conditions.

Five Easy Steps to Rose Care

- 1. Water** The single most important care you can give any rose plant is to provide adequate water. For highest quality plants with superior disease resistance, *water at least one inch per week* (about six gallons). Avoid wetting the leaves as this encourages disease. Apply water to the soil around the base of the plant, and water early in the day so the leaves will dry quickly. Good drainage is also essential. Roses need continual moisture but do not like “wet feet.”
- 2. Fertilizer** Easy care roses need little or no fertilization, though moderate fertilizer treatments will increase the size of the bush and number of blooms it produces. Apply 2 table spoons of a balanced fertilizer such as 10-10-10 or 13-13-13 around the base of the plant in mid-April. An organic fertilizer such as alfalfa pellets or manure-based products may also be used. Another application can be made in mid-June if desired. Water the bush both before and after fertilizing to prevent root burn.
- 3. Neatness** Keep the rose garden clean by removing dead leaves to discourage disease. Deadhead if you wish to encourage more flowering, but this is not required for easy care roses. Remove fallen leaves in autumn, and add a new layer of mulch in the spring to reduce fungal infections.
- 4. Pruning** Prune the plant once a year in early spring. Cut back any dead, diseased, damaged, weakened or cross branched canes. Also prune any canes that point toward the center of the plant. Prune the remaining canes down to 12 – 24 inches. This encourages the development of strong canes with an open growth habit to promote good air circulation. Groundcover roses may need only light pruning and dead or diseased canes removed. Wait to prune climbing roses until after their first flush of spring blooms.



- 5. Enjoy!** The final step in growing easy care roses is the best of all . . . enjoying the many pleasures of your beautiful rose garden!

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