

# ROSE BASICS

Growing roses can be a very rewarding experience if you are willing to put in the effort into proper care of your rose garden. This is not difficult, provided you choose a varieties that are suited to your climate, buy healthy plants, plant them in the proper location, and attend to their basic needs—water, nutrients, pest and disease control, and pruning.

## BUYING THE RIGHT ROSE:

While some roses are easier to grow than others, Little Red Riding Hood Nursery carries the varieties best suited for our local climate and conditions. Start by deciding what type of rose best suits your landscaping needs. If you are unclear about the different types, our staff will be happy to explain the difference between a climber, floribunda, grandiflora, hybrid tea, miniature, shrub or tea rose. Next, decide on a color and variety. Disease-resistant varieties, such as the David Austin English rose, "Abraham Darby," are good choices for beginners. Look for robust plants with good cane structure and remember that plants in larger containers (5 gallon) will have better established root systems. This is especially desirable when planning late in the season.

## PLANTING:

Plant your rose in a sunny location with good air circulation. Roses will do best with 6 or more hours of sun each day. Sun from early morning to mid-afternoon is most desirable. This will help keep the leaves dry, thus minimizing foliar diseases like powdery mildew, black spot, and rust. Plant roses where air circulates freely but try and keep them out of the path of regular strong winds. Allow for generous spacing between multiple plants (varies by species size) as well as from walls or fences. Roses need well-drained organic soils. Since Lubbock has neither, soil amendment is a must. Lava sand and peat moss will help with drainage and composted cotton burs and steer manure will provide nutrient and organic matter. We carry pre-mixed soil for roses to make it easier if you prefer. For the best results dig your hole 3 xs as wide as the rose container and 1.5 xs as deep. You'll want to plant the rose at the same depth as it is in the container, so fill the extra depth in your hole with a 50/50 mix of soil amendment and the soil removed from the hole. It is important not to plant the roses too deep. Keep the bud union (knob from which the cane grows) just above the soil. Next, fill in the side space with more of the 50/50 soil mix. (If replacing a rose that has died with a new one, you should use soil from another part of your garden for the 50/50 mix.) Finish planting by using a root stimulator solution. Use the root stimulator solution every two weeks for the first month or two until it is time to switch to a rose-specific fertilizer.

## WATER & NUTRIENTS:

Once established, roses will be fine with a deep watering once a week. For the first few weeks after planting, water roses every 4-5 days, especially in hot weather. Always water at the base of the plant, keeping water off of the leaves, especially in the evening. Using organic mulch will help retain soil moisture as well as help control weeds and lower soil temperature. Fertilize established roses at the first sign of growth in early spring and then after every bloom cycle throughout the season. This will be approximately every 4-6 weeks. Stop fertilizing six weeks before the first frost (Oct 20, in Lubbock) some time in early September. Newly planted roses should follow the same directions except that they should not be fertilized for the first time until the rose has become well-established and put on new growth and blooms.

## PEST & DISEASE CONTROL:

The biggest rose pests in Lubbock are aphids, spider mites and thrips. Aphids are small, but visible insects that will usually group around unopened blooms. Spider mites and thrips are less visible, but the damage they do is definitely noticeable. Thrips do their damage inside the flower buds, disfiguring them, and cause buds not to open. There are natural predators to these pests, such as lady bugs and lacewings, but for most rose growers, using an insecticide will provide more desirable results. The National Rose Society recommends removing aphids simply by using a forceful spray of water. If you use this method, do it in the morning so the sun can dry the leaves. If using chemicals, you'll want to spray in the morning or early evening after temperatures drop. Never spray chemicals when the temperature is over 85 degrees because it will burn the leaves. Systemic insecticides are the most effective because they work from inside the plant. We even carry systemic fertilizers to handle insects and fertilizing all at once. The biggest rose diseases are the foliar diseases powdery mildew, black spots and rust. To control these diseases, keep your rose garden free of dead leaves and debris and keep water off of the leaves. If you find your roses have one of these fungi, applying Danconil should correct the problem.

## PRUNING:

The time to give your roses their season pruning is early March. Pruning depends on the type of rose you buy. Shrub roses should be pruned to match each other. Climbers should not be pruned for the first two to three years after planting. Only remove dead, weak, twiggy wood, allowing your climbers to get established and produce long, flexible canes. Tree roses can be pruned more extensively if needed to maintain shape and balance. In most cases, you'll want to remove from \_ to \_ of the previous season's growth. Use sharp pruning shears and remove dead wood, weak branches, branches that cut through the plants center or that rub against other branches. Make downward sloping cuts about \_ inch above the outward facing buds. Ideal result is a V-shaped bush with a relatively open center. During the season, pruning should consist of cutting flowers or removing the spent blooms. Removing spent blooms prevents the formations of hips (the fruit that contains the seed) and will encourage better blooming. Remove flowers by cutting back to the first strong outward facing bud. These buds are located at the node of the leaf with five leaflets. Leaves with less than five leaflets tend to have weak buds. Again make your downward cut (45 degree angle) about \_ inch above the bud. Don't just snip off the flower. Doing so will produce weak straggly growth. After the last fertilizing in September, do not remove the spent flowers. Allowing rose to form hips after the last bloom cycle will slow new growth and help the rose go into dormancy for the winter.

These are just the basics. There is a world of information about rose care. It is a good idea to purchase a reference book on roses for questions and advice. In the meantime, you'll always be able to get the answers you need here at Little Red Riding Hood Nursery.

If you have any question please call, write or drop by:

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