

PERENNIAL CARE

rose 101

Roses are an iconic perennial garden staple that can provide wonderful color and structure throughout the entire gardening season. Though their care may seem daunting, a few simple maintenance tips and a little extra effort will provide roses with what they need to put on fantastic blooming displays for many years to come.

Water

- Keep new plantings well-watered in their first season of establishment.
- Established plantings should receive about 1" of water per week.
- Provide supplemental water to established plants during hot, dry periods.
- Water at the base with a garden or soaker hose.
- Avoid wetting the foliage; do not water overhead or with a sprinkler.
- Keep roses watered through fall until the ground freezes solid.

Fertilizer

- Begin fertilizing after the threat of frost has passed in early May.
- Fertilize about every four to six weeks through the end of July.
- Use a bloom-focused fertilizer like Espoma Rose Tone.
- Stop fertilizing by early August to begin preparing for dormancy.

Fall and Winter Care

- Prune tall canes back in late fall to prepare for winter coverage. Remove all pruning scraps from garden beds.
- As near-freezing temperatures approach, mulch in roses well to prevent winter kill and also to keep roses dormant during any early winter thaws.
 - Mound soil around the base of roses and apply a chunky layer of marsh hay or leaves, at least six inches thick, around the base of the plant to protect the graft union.
 - Consider caging with fencing and fill with winter mulch to insulate and protect the entire plant from winter kill and rabbit feeding.
- For large climbing roses, bundle canes together and wrap in straw or lay the bundle along the ground and mulch in well for protection.

The Minnesota Tip Method

The best protection option, and a **must** for tender or non-hardy roses

- Apply dormant oil spray to plants in early October.
- Tie canes together in mid-October with twine after pruning.
- Dig a trench next to the bush that can accommodate the entire plant.
- Gently loosen the soil around the roots and pull soil away from the crown.
- Gently insert a spading fork behind the root ball and push into trench.
- Cover the rose plant with two to three inches of soil.
- When the ground is frozen, apply 6-12" of winter mulch.
- Fence around the plant or lay caging over the mounded winter mulch

Spring Care and Pruning

The goal of spring pruning is to create an open plant structure to promote light penetration and air movement throughout the plant. Pruning will also encourage fresh spring growth of strong, bud-bearing branches.

- 1 Begin removing winter covering in early April, continuing to remove mulch as it thaws. In mid-April, check if the soil is thawed, if so, tip the bush back upright if tipped. Water regularly until new growth emerges.
- 2 Once buds are formed and actively growing, use a sanitized knife or pruners to cut any dead branches (not green inside when cut) back to the base of the plant. Always make angled cuts to prevent water from pooling in freshly cut stems.
- 3 Remove any spindly, insignificant growth—generally anything smaller than a pencil in diameter.
- 4 Remove any branches that are rubbing or growing into each other, as this dense growth can impact new growth and create open wounds where disease and insects may enter.
- 5 Once only healthy, strong branches remain, cut back to the next furthest node until you begin to see green in each stem. Keep overall shape in mind, aiming for an open upright vase-like shape, though desired appearance will vary slightly by rose type. Cut back each stalk to about a quarter of an inch above a bud eye (somewhere by a node where there is a slight growth protruding), prioritizing cuts above outward facing buds.
- 6 When you are finished, make sure to eliminate all loose plant material from the bed and admire your work!