

BASIC INFORMATION ON ROSES

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The great paradox: Roses are among the hardiest plants in your garden, yet they require more care than most other plants.

They need a minimum of 6 hours of direct sun, but you might well get away with less in this climate.

6.0-6.5 pH is optimum.

Good drainage is important. Roses do not like their roots sitting in water, but they do better if deep-watered regularly. In hot weather at least 5 gal. per week. Amend clay soils as you would for any perennial.

Get your soil tested. Years of fertilization can lead to toxic levels of phosphorus or potassium.

Buying quality plants from a reputable seller is important.

What are you looking for in a rose?

Landscape plant or cut flower?

Size of shrub and type of rose.

- Earthkind roses

- Knock Out roses

- New disease-resistant roses

Grafted or own-root?

Potted or planted immediately?

If potted, a no. 7 nursery pot (ca. 7 gal.) is ideal. Use Fafard 3B (inert) potting soil and mix with worm castings at a ratio of 4 or 5 Fafard to 1 castings. Add a quarter cup of rose starter fertilizer (high in phosphorus for rapid root growth) and fertilize throughout the season with small amounts of high nitrogen fertilizer. Fish oil and/or seaweed work well for that. Water frequently, and you might add water crystals to help keep the potting soil moist.

Organic or not?

Fertilizing – Chemical fertilizers leave residual salts. Applications of gypsum will help to leach out salts and also help break up clay soils. Consider Mills Magic, an organic fertilizer, but don't use on vegetables due to possible heavy metal content. Look into cottonseed meal, inexpensive and generally about 7-2-1.

Pruning and deadheading – Don't be afraid. You can prune roses to the ground, and they will bounce back vigorously.

Pests and Diseases (Everything and everybody loves plants in the rose family) – aphids, sawflies, thrips, black spot, cane borers, powdery mildew, etc..

Spraying against fungal diseases:

The following are contact killers (There are also systemics like Banner Max):

- Lime Sulfur

- Mancozeb-very low acute toxicity in mammals

- Daconil-avoid eye and lung contact

USEFUL RESOURCES

ABRRS (Asheville-Blue Ridge Rose Society) or your local rose society

rosemania.com – contains rather complete information on available insecticides, fungicides and miticides.

helpmefind.com/roses – very useful information on almost any rose.

millsmix.com – seller of fertilizers and other rose products.

davidaustinroses.com – David Austin is a breeder and seller of English roses with an excellent mail order business.

Roses Unlimited – seller of own-root roses in Laurens, SC. – and many other mail order sellers of roses

Biltmore rose garden – a good place to see a wide variety of roses growing under conditions in this area.

Short List of Excellent Roses for the Asheville Area

The following roses are from my personal experience highly resistant to fungal diseases and need no (or minimal) spraying against black spot and powdery mildew:

Carefree Beauty, Griffith Buck Shrub – parent of Knock Out.

Lady of Shalott, David Austin Shrub

Lafter, early Hybrid Tea

Lion's Fairy Tale, Kordes Floribunda

Mother of Pearl, Meilland Grandiflora

Orchid Romance, Radler Floribunda

Quietness, Griffith Buck Shrub – only available through Roses Unlimited.

Excellenz von Schubert, Polyantha – in general, polyanthas tend to be highly disease resistant.