

## Rose Gardening

Roses have gotten a bad wrap over the years for being difficult to grow and maintain. If you are thinking of rose gardening don't let this rumor stop you. While rose gardening can prove to be challenging, once you get the hang of it, it really isn't that bad.

When you first start rose gardening, you will have to choose what type of rose you wish to plant, and no, I'm not talking about the color. You will have to choose between bare-root, pre-packaged, and container-grown roses. Bare-root roses are sold in the winter and early spring. They should be planted as soon as frosts are over and the ground is warm and workable. Pre-packaged roses are bare-root plants that are sold in a bag or box with something around the roots to retain moisture, such as sawdust. Container-grown roses are grown; you guessed it, in containers. They will be either budding or already in bloom when they become available in the early spring.

Planting in rose gardening is not that much different than any other type of plant. The most important thing, as always, is good, healthy soil and a prime planting area. It doesn't matter whether your roses are bare-root or container-grown, the planting methods are the same as any other shrub. Make sure the spot you choose has good drainage, gets plenty of sunlight, and will not overcrowd your roses. Before planting, any dead leaves and thin or decayed shoots need to be cut off. Any damaged or very long roots also need to be trimmed. Soak bare-root roses in water about 10-12 hours to restore moisture in the roots before planting and water the soil before planting as well. Make sure the hole you have dug is large enough for the root growth of the rose. Also it is a good idea to use compost or mulch. After all, roses like extra nutrients just like any other plant.

Roses need the same things as other plants; they are just a bit needier. One of the most important things to remember in rose gardening is that roses are heavy feeders and will need several fertilizer applications. Fertilizing should be started in early spring and discontinued in early fall. Make sure not to over-fertilize (fertilize should come with instructions) and water after each feeding. Roses require large amounts of water; a thorough watering twice a week should be enough.

Pruning is an essential part to flower gardening. It increases blooms and encourages healthy plant growth. Different varieties of roses have different instructions for pruning, so you might want to read up on your rose types and see what is suggested.

The main thing to remember in rose gardening is to water, water, and water some more. One other thing about rose gardening is the amount of fertilizer and nutrients you will need to use, and the pruning that needs to be done to keep your roses under control and healthy. Even though rose gardening takes a little more time and roses are more work, they are one of the most unique and beautiful plants, and definitely worth the extra work.