

Roses

Planting and Care in Central Oregon

Amy Jo Detweiler

Are you longing to enjoy the fragrance and color of roses in your yard? With thoughtful attention to planting and care, many types of roses can be grown successfully in Central Oregon. The following tips will help you grow this popular landscape plant.

Selecting a rose

See "Types of roses" for descriptions of the general types of roses available. Visit your local Extension office, nursery or garden center for suggestions on the best types of roses for your area. Select a rose suited to your area's USDA hardiness zone, and look for disease-resistant varieties.

Preparing the planting site

Location

Choose a spot that will receive at least 6 to 8 hours of sunlight daily — morning sun is ideal. A site protected from the wind also is recommended.

Soil

Roses prefer moist, well-drained soil. In Central Oregon, native soils are predominantly sandy and can benefit from additions of organic matter. These amendments improve water-holding capacity and aid in initial plant establishment. Before planting, you can amend the planting area by tilling compost 6 to 12 inches deep into the soil.

Planting your rose

Spacing

Space miniature roses about 2 to 2.5 feet apart, depending on variety. Grandiflora, floribunda, and hybrid teas should be spaced about 2.5 to 3 feet apart. Check the label for mature height and width before planting.



'Winnipeg Parks', a hardy shrub rose, blooms in red.

Photo: Amy Jo Detweiler



A white blooming hybrid tea rose, 'Pope John Paul II'.

Photo: Amy Jo Detweiler

Digging the hole

Roses are produced using a variety of methods. Roses usually come in either a plastic container or bareroot, and the type determines the size of the planting hole needed.

For plastic container plants, dig the planting hole twice as wide as the container. Then remove the plant from the container, center it and place it in the hole.

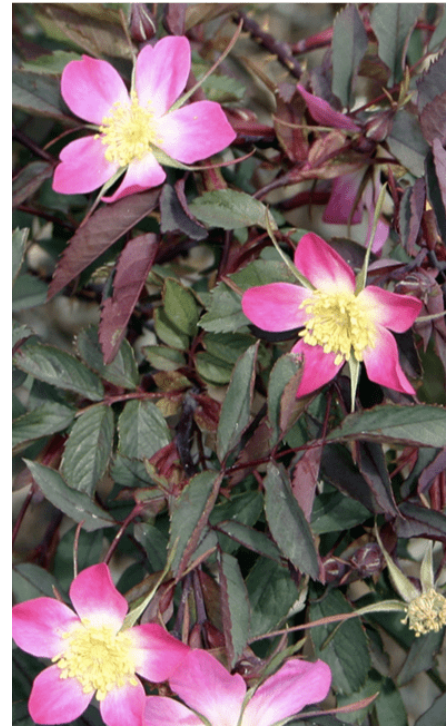
For bareroot roses, dig the planting hole wide enough so that you can spread the roots in the hole horizontally. In both cases, dig the hole deep enough so the graft (thickened bump on the lower stem) is 2 inches below soil level (see Figure 1). Planting the graft below soil level will protect the plant from winter kill. Be sure to loosen the soil on the sides and bottom of the planting hole, particularly if compacted.

Most landscaping sites in Central Oregon have been disturbed by construction activities, greatly reducing the amount of naturally occurring beneficial fungi (mycorrhizae) in the soil. These fungi grow around plant roots and improve water uptake, nutrient uptake, and root growth. They also help to reduce drought stress (Augé 2004). When you plant your roses, add mycorrhizae (usually sold in a dry formulation for home landscaping use) so that the product comes into contact with the root system of the plant.

Next, place the rose in the hole (for bareroot roses, spread the roots), and refill the hole with soil. You can add a small amount of organic matter or compost at a 1:2 ratio (one part amendment to two parts native soil).

Be careful not to over-amend the planting hole because the roots of roses need to adapt to the native soil for successful, long-term growth.

Finally, water your newly planted rose deeply. You can add a 2- to 5-inch layer of organic mulch (wood bark, coarse compost, etc.) to the soil surface to reduce soil moisture evaporation.



Redleaf rose, a hardy shrub rose known for its blooms and reddish foliage.

Photo: Amy Jo Detweiler

Figure 1

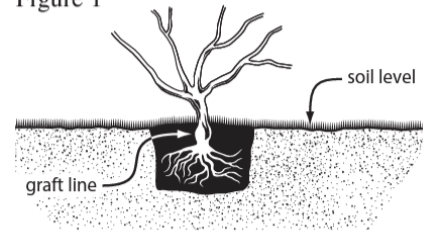


Figure 1. For bareroot roses, dig the planting hole wide enough so that you can spread the roots in the hole horizontally. Dig the hole deep enough so the graft (thickened bump on the lower stem) is 2 inches below soil level.

Photo: Amy Jo Detweiler

Caring for your rose

Watering

Water your rose deeply early in the day, wetting the entire root ball.

Allow the soil to just barely dry out between waterings. (A general guideline is to water approximately every three to five days.) If you mulched the soil surface, the soil will retain moisture longer.

Be careful not to overwater, and avoid overhead watering. Water remaining on the plants can increase susceptibility to plant disease (e.g., black spot or powdery mildew) and damage flowers and leaves.

Fertilizing

Use a general, well-balanced fertilizer (e.g., 10-10-10). Make the first application during bud break in the spring. You can fertilize every four to six weeks during the growing season, but stop fertilization in late summer (late August or early September) as the roses begin to go dormant.

Winter care

Unless canes are tall, do not cut roses back until the spring. Cut tall canes back to a height of 3 feet in the fall to avoid winter breakage. After the ground is frozen, you can add plastic rose collars and mulch your roses with wood bark to provide winter insulation. Wrap the collar around the base of the plant and fill it with mulch approximately 6 to 8 inches deep.

Winter watering is very important for rose survival in a high desert environment. Water your roses every four to six weeks when there is no snow cover and the ground is not frozen; two or three times throughout the entire winter.

Spring care and pruning

Prune your roses in spring as the weather begins to warm (generally late April or early May). Pruning stimulates new growth, so resist the urge to cut back roses too early in the spring, or the new growth may get nipped by frost.

First remove all dead wood and thin canes to improve ventilation.



'Blaze' is a climbing red rose.

Photo: Amy Jo Detweiler



A multicolor floribunda rose, 'Mardi Gras'.

Photo: Amy Jo Detweiler

Cut back remaining healthy canes to a height of 12 to 18 inches. When severe frost danger has passed, cut canes down to 6 to 8 inches.

During the growing season, roses can be pruned to encourage more blooms. When removing spent blooms, cut the stem back to just above the second five-leaflet leaf (counting back from the tip). This will enable new growth to sprout from that point. Use a slant cut (Figure 2).

Planting damage

Monitor your roses for signs of environmental, disease, or insect damage and treat as needed. The most common rose problems include aphids, black spot, rust, and powdery mildew. For more information on identifying rose damage and suggested management, contact your local Extension office or visit the [PNW Handbooks](https://pnwhandbooks.org/). (<https://pnwhandbooks.org/>)



Figure 2. An example of a slant cut.

Photo: Amy Jo Detweiler

Types of roses

There are several kinds of roses, each with different characteristics and needs. The general characteristics of several types are given here.

A **climbing rose** has stiff stems with medium to large flowers borne on the framework of mature wood, which typically is permanent. Most bloom throughout the summer, although a few bloom only in early summer. Climbers can grow quite tall and likely will need support. They do not attach naturally, so they must be tied to or trained through the support. Climbers do not need to be cut back like other roses. After they have leafed out in the spring, cut off only the dead portions of the cane. Some climbers are hybrid teas grafted onto climbing roots and may have the same name as a hybrid tea.

Floribundas grow approximately 3 feet tall and have flowers that generally are smaller than those on grandiflora and hybrid tea roses. Clusters of blooms on short stems give the effect of mass color. Most floribundas bloom throughout the summer, but they may rest during the hottest weeks.

Grandifloras have flowers similar to those on hybrid teas and provide similar amounts of colorful blooms for cutting. Flowers are borne on long stems, often in clusters, and are scented. These roses bloom throughout the summer. The plants usually are taller than hybrid teas and generally reach 3 to 6 feet in height. This type of rose often is sold and used interchangeably with hybrid teas.

Hybrid teas are long-stemmed, often fragrant, and excellent for cutting. This type is what we think of most often when we hear the word “rose,” and it is the kind most commonly used by florists. Hybrid tea roses bloom throughout the summer and can reach a height of 3 to 5 feet, depending on variety.

Miniature roses are smaller versions of the other types of roses and reach heights of only 8 inches to 2 feet. They bloom prolifically all summer, are fragrant, and generally are more cold-hardy than floribunda, grandiflora, and hybrid tea roses.

Shrub or rugosa roses often are referred to as “hardy” shrub roses and can look like wild roses. Shrub roses include many plants with roselike blooms and scents, but they do not require as much care as other roses. In fact, these plants require no more care than a typical shrub (e.g., spirea), and are a great choice for a high desert area. They bloom throughout the summer or periodically, depending on variety.



Rose hips and fall color on a rugosa rose.

Photo: Amy Jo Detweiler



A floribunda rose, ‘Scentimental’, blooms in red and white.

Photo: Amy Jo Detweiler

For more information

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