



## **GROWING BEAUTIFUL ROSES IN THE DESERT SOUTHWEST**

The Rose Garden at Mesa Community College

Mesa-East Valley Rose Society

### **ROSE SELECTION:**

- Buy only #1 grade roses as these have the best chance to get established and survive our summer heat.
- Buy and plant bare-root roses from January to mid-February. Make sure each bush has 3 strong, healthy canes. Reject those with fewer canes or roots that are spindly.
- Do not buy roses that have been dipped in wax or bare-root roses that have started to leaf out.
- Buy rose varieties that do well in the desert. Potted roses should be in the ground by late March to get established before summer heat.

### **SITE SELECTION:**

- Roses do best with at least six hours of sun a day. East exposure is ideal as this gives protection from hot afternoon sun.
- Plant away from large trees or shrubs that would compete for food, water, and sun.
- Check soil for good drainage.
- Most standard roses should be placed at least 3-4' apart, miniatures 18-24" apart.

### **PREPARING BARE ROOT ROSES:**

- Prune canes of rose bush to 8-12", preferably to outside bud. Seal cuts with wood glue.
- Use 32 gallon trash can filled with water and a tablespoon of B-1 or few drops of Super Thrive and soak entire bush for 24 - 48 hours. You can get several bushes in the trash can.

### **PREPARING THE HOLE:**

- Dig hole 18 to 24" wide. Width is crucial for good feeder root development.
- Scratch in 1/2 to 1 cup of Disper-sul or Tiger Brand Soil Sulfur in bottom of the hole. Then add 1/2 cup Triple Super Phosphate (0-45-0) as a clump.

### **PREPARING THE FILL SOIL:**

- Mix in a large container or wheelbarrow about 30% forest mulch or compost, 50 % original soil and 20% Perlite, which will help keep soil from compacting. Place a couple of shovels

of mix in hole over amendments and form a mound.

### **PLANTING THE BARE ROOT ROSE:**

- Trim off 1/4" of all root tips to stimulate growth and remove any damaged roots. Place rose on mound, draping roots comfortably over cone. Bud union should be just above surface when hole is filled.
- Fill hole with soil mix; firm soil around roots. When hole is half filled, add water to soak soil, and then fill up hole with soil mix.
- Turn on water hose full blast. Push hose into soil several inches to saturate soil around roots; this helps eliminate air pockets and keeps the rose from drying out.
- Water at least every-other day for 10-14 days; then once weekly for spring watering.

### **PRUNING LARGE ROSES:**

- Fall pruning is a light pruning done in September/October when the temperature falls below 90°. Cut out dead or spindly growth and 6-8" off branches. This light pruning will stimulate new fall growth.
- Winter pruning is our major pruning season and should be done between January and mid-February.
- Prune to an outside bud. Cut 1/4" above the bud at a 45° angle. By mid-January you can usually see the buds beginning to swell on the canes. If not, cut where a leaf is, or used to be.
- Cut off 1/3 to 1/2 the bush. Remaining canes, usually 5-12, should be at least pencil thickness in size.
- Cut out all spindly branches, dead wood and crossing wood.
- Seal cuts with Elmer's Wood Glue to prevent rose borers from getting into canes.

### **WATERING:**

It is almost impossible to overwater roses if they have proper drainage. Rose roots need to grow down deeply, as roots near the surface are exposed to high desert heat and drying out; deep watering will also keep salts from accumulating in the root zone, causing brown leaf tips.

- On average, water roses deeply once or twice a week in the spring and fall.
- When temperature rises above 90<sup>0</sup>, water two or three times a week if you flood irrigate; 4 or 5 times a week if you drip irrigate. Each drip irrigation should be a minimum of 4-6 gallons per bush.
- In the summertime, a two inch layer of mulch (medium-size bark chips, pine needles, or compost) can help conserve the moisture in the soil and keep roots cooler as well as keep weeds down.
- Depending on how dry the winter is deep water approximately once a week in the winter.

## **FERTILIZING:**

Roses are heavy feeders. There are many good fertilizers, both organic and inorganic that will produce beautiful roses. It is important to fertilize on a regular schedule and not whenever you feel like it. To avoid burning roots, water before and after you fertilize.

- Begin your fertilization program in mid-February after roses are pruned. Then use only an organic fertilizer.
  - GroGanic or Millorganite. Use 1 - 2 cups per bush. Water in.
- After March 15 or after you have 2 - 3" of new growth you can begin with inorganic fertilizers, i.e. Miracle Gro's General Purpose (24-8-16) or Arizona Best Rose Food;
  - Miracle Gro's General Purpose (24-8-16). Use 1 TBS to one gallon of water or apply with hose end sprayer. Use one gallon per standard bush, 1/2 that for a miniature.
  - Arizona Best Rose Food. Use 1 cup and scratch into the top 1" of the soil and water in.
- June through mid-September, use 1/3 of usual amount of fertilizer you use in the program above.
  - Miracle Gro's General Purpose (24-8-16); Use 1 TBS to one gallon of water or apply with hose end sprayer. Use 1/3 gallon per standard bush, 1/2 that for a miniature; needs to be used every 6 weeks.
  - Arizona Best Rose Food. Use 1/3 cup and scratch into the top 1" of the soil and water in.
- Mid-September through mid-December
  - Miracle Gro's General Purpose (24-8-16). Use 1 TBS to one gallon of water or apply with hose end sprayer. Use one gallon per standard bush, 1/2 that for a miniature.
  - Arizona Best Rose Food. Use 1 cup and scratch into the top 1" of the soil and water in.
- Mid-December through mid-February - no fertilizer.

TIP: To promote basal breaks, use 1/2 cup Epsom Salts per large bush in mid-March and late April.

## **INSECT CONTROL:**

- Aphids
  - Hose off bush 2-3 times a week; above and underneath the foliage (March).
  - Merit: mix according to label.

- Bayer Rose and Flower Insect Killer which contains imidacloprid (Merit); mix according to label.
- Thrips
  - Fertilome Systemic Insecticide at the labeled rate.
  - Captain Jack's Dead Bug Concentrate with Spinosad (Berridge Nursery); spray just the buds 2-3 times a week. Mix according to label. Pour into a hand sprayer or even a small plastic spray bottle.
- Spider mites
  - Hose off bush 2-3 times a week; above and underneath the foliage.
  - Avid, Kelthane, or Floramite; mix according to label.

TIP: When mixing a spray for insects or disease, use Indicate 5 for a spreader sticker. This neutralizes the pH of the water and helps to spray coat the entire upper and lower surfaces of the leaves.

#### **DISEASE CONTROL:**

- Powdery Mildew: watch for a white, dusty film on leaves which alerts you to begin spraying at regular intervals (February & October).
  - Use Fertilome Systemic Fungicide, Funginex, or Banner Maxx; mix according to label.

*The Deadheaders* meet the third Saturday of each month at 8:00am in The Rose Garden at Mesa Community College at the North end of the campus.

*The Mesa East-Valley Rose Society* meets the second Thursday of each month from 7-9 pm in the community room at Elsner Library at Mesa Community College: [www.roses4az-mevrs.org](http://www.roses4az-mevrs.org).