

# Home & Garden

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## Tips For Healthier Roses That Bloom Better, Longer

Beautiful roses are a sure sign of a serious and successful gardener. Roses take more care and attention than most garden plants, but the results can be spectacular.

Choosing the right kind of roses for your environment and the effect you're trying to achieve will get you started right. Roses come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and not all varieties are suited to the harsher growing regions of Canada.

Bush roses include hybrid tea roses, the

type that grow a single flower on a stem, and can grow to three feet in height or more. While very beautiful and suitable for cutting, they are among the most difficult roses to grow due to their susceptibility to disease and insect damage. They need regular maintenance to look their best. Other types of bush roses include the floribundas, a type with several flowers on each stem. They are somewhat harder than tea roses and are also available in a wide range of

colours, but are less suitable for cutting. Another type of bush rose is the grandiflora, a cross between the hybrid tea rose and the floribunda, with some of the best characteristics of each. While not as hardy as the floribunda, they offer clusters of large tea-rose type blooms on long stems.

Shrub roses are some of the best types to blend with other plants in a landscape. They are natural-looking, low-maintenance shrubs that are often highly resistant to insect and disease problems and are hardy in cold temperatures.

Miniature roses are excellent in all spaces or even containers. They also grow well indoors if given enough light. There is a great range available, many smaller versions of most other rose types, and they are fairly easy to grow.

Climbing and rambling roses can be trained to climb a trellis or wires and are relatively easy to grow. Climbers are the most common ones you'll find at nurseries. They do take some extra care to avoid winter kill, and good pruning practices are important. With a bit of extra care, these roses can be spectacular on a wall or an archway.

Whichever type of rose you decide on, be sure to buy quality stock from a reputable garden centre.

### Where To Start

Roses like good depth (two feet) of a fairly heavy clay loam soil and will not thrive in sandy or heavy clay soil. They also require fairly high levels of light and good air circulation. Roses planted in a partially shaded, confined area are unlikely to bloom much and will be more susceptible to disease. Choose your location carefully, make sure the soil is improved if needed, and you will be rewarded. Don't buy your roses until about a day before you're ready to plant them.

### Planting

The night before you'll be planting, unpack all the bare-root roses and soak them in water for 12 hours. The next morning, carry one plant at a time to the planting area in a pail of water. The entire bed should be prepared, not just single holes dug.

Dig a hole in the prepared bed large enough to give the roots lots of space. Make a mound in the bottom of the hole to spread the roots over. The bud union (where the branches come out of the root) should be one inch to two inches below the ground level in a cold climate. Fill in the hole, firm the soil and gently pour the pail of water around the plant. If you are planting early in the spring, mound more soil up around the stems to protect the plant until temperatures warm up, then remove it.

Potted roses can be planted much like other shrubs. Water them in their pots before planting.

### Pruning

During the first spring, roses should be pruned back almost to ground level using sharp pruners. Clip off any thin shoots, leaving only the ones thicker than a pencil. Look for an outward-facing bud that is three or four buds up from the ground and prune on an angle to match the bud, just above it but not too close. In subsequent years you can leave five or six buds.

### Feeding

Don't feed new roses until the new growth is at least two inches long; then they should be fertilized regularly following the label directions. Use a fertilizer like Vigoro Premium Rose Food 6-9-5 or PINK Vigoro. Don't feed after late summer.

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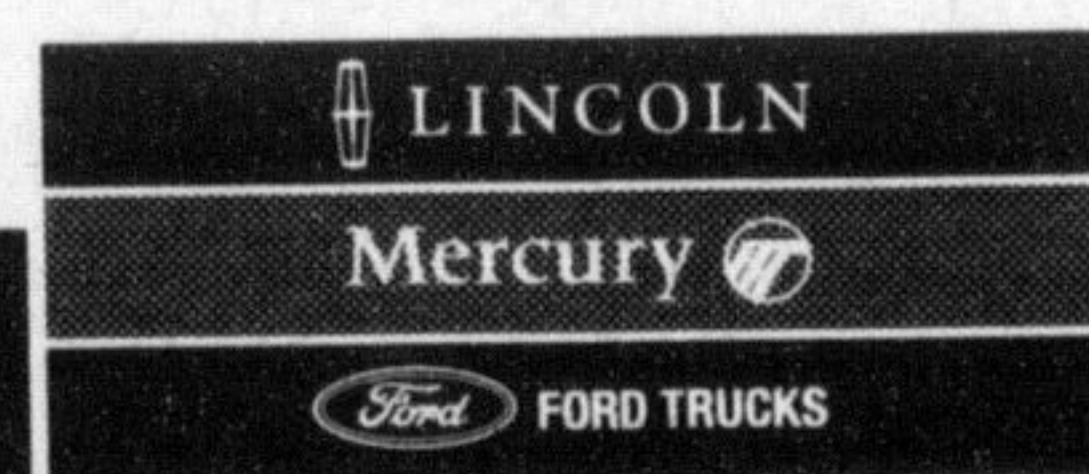
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