



Roses

Written by Adrian van der Bijl
Master Gardener

History shows that roses were first cultivated 5000 years ago in China. The Greeks are credited with bringing roses to Europe, while the Romans spread its culture to everywhere their armies conquered. Today the rose is still the world's most popular flower.

The most common types of roses are: **Miniature; Hybrid Tea, Floribunda; Grandiflora; Shrub and Climbing Rose.**

Miniatures are the easiest roses to grow because they are grown from a slip, not grafted. They bloom more often and longer than larger varieties and usually winter well with a blanket of snow covering them for protection.

Hybrid Teas are very good as cut flowers and spectacular in the garden. They come in a wide variety of beautiful colours and delicate scents. They require a little more work during the season pruning and removing suckers from below the graft, but they are well worth the trouble.

Grandifloras flowers in clusters of blooms that look similar to Tea Roses but smaller in size. They bloom more often and for a longer period than Teas.

Floribundas flower in clusters which are smaller than Grandiflora. Also a prolific bloomer, it is available in single, double or semi-double varieties.

Shrub Roses are wild or semi-wild and make excellent hedging. Some are cultivated to get different varieties of flowers. They usually have seven leaves per stem, are hardier and require less care than any other type of rose.

Climbing Roses are beautiful cascading over fences, arbors or on a trellis against a wall. Most varieties bloom throughout the summer and should be dead-headed to encourage continuous flowering. These varieties have replaced the older type that only had one period of blooming. For the first two or three years after planting don't prune climbing roses except to remove dead wood or unwanted branches. Allow them to establish mature canes.

When purchasing your rose remember that bushes planted in peat pots or plastic containers are healthier. If you buy a rose wrapped in a

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plastic bag, be sure the plant has no fresh sprouts on it indicating it has already started growing. This takes all the nourishment out of the shrub and root leaving nothing for the plant to grow on. Rose roots are slow to develop and can't keep up with the demands of the shrub for moisture and nourishment if drained by early growth.

The best time to plant roses is in spring after the danger of hard frost has passed. This allows the entire growing season for the rosebush to establish itself and better withstand stressful conditions. Rose roots grow deep so it is important to work the soil deeply to allow the roots to spread. Roses will survive in almost any soil, but for optimum growth, mix lots of organic matter such as compost or well-rotted manure with the soil to promote root development. It is also important to plant the graft below the soil level where it will be protected. Water well after planting. Don't fertilize for the first year as tender young roots can be burnt. Your nursery will be happy to educate you on the proper care of your rose and assist you in the battle against insects and diseases if it arises.

I encourage you to add this elegant and most beautiful of flowers to your garden, and as they flourish, by all means, *remember to stop and smell your roses!*