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Rose Care

Water Adequately

To assist in **rose care**, only a select few parts of the country can rely on rainfall to be an adequate source of water for roses. The actual frequency of watering will depend on your soil and climate as well as the age of the plant. Try watering the soil around your rose a few mornings a week – water slowly, until the soil is thoroughly soaked 12 to 18 inches deep. Try to keep water from splashing onto foliage as this can spread diseases.

Feed Regularly

While **cared for roses** honored by our Region's Choice initiative only need fertilizing once a year, most roses appreciate an occasional feeding. The easiest way to remember when to feed your roses, is to think of fertilizer like a reward for the plant: the first feeding should be done when the bush first leafs out. For the remainder of the growing season, fertilize after each flush of blooms ("Good job rose, here's a treat!"). Stop fertilizing about 2 months before the first frost, which is around Labor Day in much of the country. You can use any commercial rose food or general-purpose fertilizer applied according to manufacturer instructions. Scratch dry fertilizers into the soil beneath the leaves – avoid touching the canes or bud union – and water well.

Mulch Generously

Mulch, as an element to **rose care**, helps minimize weeds, keeps the soil moist and loose, and adds essential nutrients. Organic mulch is best – try wood chips and shavings, shredded bark, pine needles, cottonseed or cocoa-bean hulls, chipped oak leaves or peat nuggets. Apply in the spring just as the soil warms and before weeds start to grow. (It can also be applied anytime during the growing season provided weeds are removed and soil surface is lightly cultivated.) Spread 2 to 4 inches over the rose bed, leaving some space open around the base of each rose. Replace mulch as it deteriorates during the year.

Prevent Pests

The best pest prevention for roses is achieved by selecting top-quality plants and then properly caring for them. For more information about specific pests and controls for your area, check with your co-operative extension agent or AARS public garden.

Prune to Promote Blooms

If you want to maximize **rose care**, don't be nervous about pruning – there is no evidence that anyone ever killed a plant with pruning shears! To prune roses you'll need the following supplies: sharp curved-edge pruning shears; long-handled lopping shears, and gardening gloves can help protect you from thorns.

Pruning roses controls the size and shape of rose plants. Generous pruning creates bigger plants and eventually more flowers per plant. Selective pruning of top growth can produce bigger, but fewer, blooms. Here are some tips:

- For modern varieties, pruning keeps them blooming repeatedly all summer long.
- Well-established hybrid teas, floribundas and grandifloras should be pruned early each spring after the winter protection has been removed and just as the buds begin to swell.
- Old-fashioned roses and climbers that bloom only once a year should be pruned immediately after flowering since they bloom on wood from the previous year's growth.

The **diagram** shows the preferred angle to prune. (**45 degree**)

Use a commercial rose food or general-purpose fertilizer applied according to manufacturer instructions.

Work in dry fertilizers into the soil beneath the leaves – but not touching the canes or bud union and water well

INFORMATION FROM:

<http://www.rose.org/rose-care/>

