

Rose Care by the Month

January

Hold off on pruning bush roses until February (Valentine's Day is a good marker).

Climbing roses should be trained but not pruned. Weave long canes through openings in trellises or arbors and tie them with jute twine or plastic/wire plant ties. Securing canes now prevents damage from winter winds and contributes toward a more refined look to the garden when roses are blooming.

Now is an excellent time to select and plant container-grown roses to fill in those bare spots in your rose garden.

February

Plant bare-rooted roses this month. Buy top quality plants and plant them immediately to prevent desiccation.

Prune bush roses use good shears that will make clean cuts. Remove dead, dying and weak canes. Leave four to eight healthy canes and remove approximately one-half of the top growth and height of the plant. Always pruning just above buds facing away from the centers of the plants. Miniature bush roses are pruned by the same percentage. (Valentine's Day is a good way to remember the time for pruning.)

This does not mean to prune climbing roses, wait until they have bloomed to prune and shape them.

Fertilize roses, as buds break and new growth begins. Use a fertilizer recommended for roses.

March

Protect roses against black spot and mildew with appropriate fungicide applied weekly.

Fertilize roses with specialty rose fertilizer, monthly to every six weeks now until September. (Though check monthly recommendations because some months fertilizing is not suggested.)

April

Roses can be planted now.

Climbing hybrid tea roses may be pruned as soon as they complete blooming. Prune climbing roses to remove weak branches entirely and cut vigorous canes back by 30% to 40%.

May

Some gardeners feel this is the last month to plant roses from containers because of the coming heat of the summer months and they do not feel roses should be transplanted after this month. If roses are planted after this month, they **WILL** need extra care to help them through our hot and mostly dry summer months.

Pay attention to training climbers and ramblers to the arbor, trellis, fence or other structures. New growth on these will continue throughout the summer so train them for better results and keep them under control.

June

This begins the most stressful time of the year for roses. Watering is most important for the survival of your plants. Roses planted this year need a deep watering when they go five to seven days without a soaking rain (1 to 1 ½ inches). Maintain a moist but not wet or dry soil during the active growing period of the roses. Avoid watering the foliage if possible. If your system does water the foliage, irrigate during the morning when the foliage will dry quickly and not scorch the leaves.

You can fertilize this month with your favorite rose fertilizer or good quality, slow release 3:1:2 or 4:1:2 ratio fertilizer.

A regular weekly spraying with products that contain a fungus control aid for blackspot and an insect control aid for pests is important. You may also need to use a miticide for control of mites. Use these products only if needed. This is the advantage of disease resistant roses such as Texas Superstars and Earthkind.

This is a good month to prune roses that only bloom one time and have finished their bloom for this year.

July

At this time of year with the extreme temperatures and lack of water, it is difficult to transplant roses and not the best time to plant them. It can be done but to assure success, you will need to be diligent in their care.

Water roses as needed to maintain a moist soil (not soggy or dry). When needed, water thoroughly and moisten to a depth of 4 to 6-inches. Mulching a depth of 3 to 4-inches and maintaining that depth will help stabilize the soil moisture, reduce weeds, and moderates the soil temperatures.

Fertilization during this month is not recommended. If you have followed the recommended fertilization schedule, it is not necessary.

Continue to monitor your roses for blackspot, spider mites, leaf-cutter bees, caterpillars, beetles and weeds.

August

Late this month is an important time to fertilize your roses. Use a rose fertilizer (3:1:2 or 4:1:2 ratio). This will provide nutrients for vigorous growth and flowering for the next few months. Fertilize after pruning this month.

You can prune your roses late this month to help them during the fall blooming season. This is another great time to remove all dead wood, diseased canes and twiggy growth. Cut the remaining canes to just above a bud that faces away from the center of the bush. Climbers and ramblers should only be pruned now to correct errant growth, remove dead wood or diseased canes because they bloom on growth they make at this time.

Keep yellow, fallen leaves picked up from rose beds. These fallen, infected leaves often serve as a source of disease.

September

Roses need good drainage but still need consistent moisture so continue to monitor your roses concerning their needs.

If you did not fertilize in late August, early this month is the time to do so. The late August/early September is the last fertilization required for the year.

Continue to monitor insects and pests on your roses and when necessary, keep up the seven-day spray schedule.

October

Now is a good time to plant container roses and you can continue planting into the winter. If October is still too hot, you may want to wait until November. The best time for planting depends on the temperature levels for that year.

As flower production increases, remember to begin deadheading again. Keep your pruning to a minimum. Only prune deadwood or damaged canes.

Continue to monitor the moisture in your flowerbeds. This can be a dry month so do not think the beds can be left alone.

No fertilizer is needed for this month.

Watch your roses for disease and pest problems. With the cooler weather, you may be able to reduce the frequency of your protection.

November

With the cooler weather, you may be able to decrease the supplemental watering. Water only as needed to maintain a moist soil. Water directly to the roots with soaker hoses or irrigation systems that spray the water into the soil and not on the leaves.

No fertilizer is required this month.

You should be able to stop your spray schedule this month.

Avoid heavy pruning this month but you may still want to deadhead your roses.

December

This is a great time to transplant roses.

Do not prune this month.

No fertilizer or pest controls are required this month.