

POOR DAVID'S ALMANAC

BY DAVE INGRAM, CONSULTING ROSARIAN

"The only dumb question is the one that's never asked."

Getting Started With Roses – Volume I

It wasn't that long ago that I planted my first rose. Covered with mud, I remember staring down at the plant and thinking, "Is this going to work? Will this plant live?" Nope. It died. And after other failures, I joined the Denver Rose Society to learn how to do it right. The next time, again covered with as much dirt as I'd placed around the plants, and with my new copy of "*Growing Roses in Colorado*" soggy with mud, I planted several roses. This time, they lived. And now I have over a hundred of the things, and may have to tear down our house so I can plant more. So while I'm miles from knowing it all, I thought I'd share some of my lessons with our new members who are trying to learn. I'll cover starting a new garden, then talk about how to care for recent plantings, along with roses you may have inherited if you've moved into a house that already has some.



These articles should be used in conjunction with the more complete information in the copy of "*Growing Roses in Colorado*" you receive when you join the Denver Rose Society as a new member. In addition, you have access to our network of Consulting Rosarians here in Colorado, those of us (I'm one) who are certified by the American Rose Society to answer your questions by phone or e-mail. And our monthly meetings are a great opportunity to ask questions.

New Gardens

Yes, it's early February, but the time to get started with planning is now. What is your dream? A single rose bush by itself, or a border along a sidewalk with several roses? An entire garden devoted to roses? (That's what I did.) Measure the space and draw it out on paper. Calculate the square footage. Try to plan the space so you never have to walk in the garden to reach the plants (which compacts the soil - Bad Thing). Consider raising the level of your garden above ground level (more on this below). Two key ingredients in your plan when you're just starting out are:

Secret Tip—Roses do their best with at least 6 hours of sun each day. Less sun usually means smaller plants, fewer flowers and worse health. And roses don't like competition from tree roots. Place your garden accordingly.

Secret Tip—Leave enough room between the plants! Crowded roses become prime targets for insect and disease problems, and facilitates their spread. My gardens suffer from this in places, and it causes extra work. Do your best to study the plants you're considering, and try to learn how tall and wide they'll get. Leave at least 2 ft between minis, 4 ft between most others; even more between larger shrubs.

Once the ground thaws enough to dig, my advice is to brush the cobwebs off your shovel and get started! In my opinion, the single best thing you can do to succeed with roses (after locating your garden properly) is to prepare good soil for them to grow in. A good garden soil teems with a diversity of life; from bacteria to fungi to earthworms, and the sooner you prepare it, the more developed it will be by the time we plant in May. So, the first step:

Secret Tip—Check the drainage, as outlined in “*Growing Roses*.” Most of us here in the Denver area have a heavy, compacted clay soil that drains poorly, and flooded rose roots shut down and die. There are also areas of sandy soil around, where water drains all too quickly, and of course dried-out rose roots also die. *Next step, very important:*

Secret Tip—Get a soil test. Don’t ignore, don’t assume, don’t guess. Find a local garden center that can test your soil for things like nutrients and pH. Then dig up a sample from a couple or three spots, bag it and have them test it. They’ll tell you what’s good or bad, and can advise you on how to fix anything that is way out of whack. For a more thorough test through the mail, contact the Colorado State University Extension Service. Armed with the results of your soil test, you are now ready for the next step:

Secret Tip—The simplest and often best solution for most soil problems is the addition of organic matter. A lot of organic matter, like, the addition of 30 or 40% to the soil you have now. This will improve the flow of oxygen and water drainage in dense clay soils, as well as aid water retention in porous sandy soils. It can also help correct many pH problems and nutrient deficiencies. The organic matter feeds the soil organisms that in turn will help make your roses thrive. The “growing” of a good soil takes time, so the sooner you start, the better.

Here in the Society, we’ve probably used just about every form of organic matter there is to prepare our soils. I like to use compost, either home-made or bagged for small projects, or bulk from a local garden center for a big garden. Compost offers a variety of materials and textures that help break up my nasty clay soil. The loosening of compacted clay soils, then the addition of compost adds up to a lot of extra dirt, so I like to use raised beds to help contain it, built from everything from treated lumber to landscape blocks to raise the garden level 6 to 10 inches. This helps drainage (or water retention as the case may be), lessens the amount of left-over material, and offers a different design element in the yard.

I strip and discard the sod, then dig deep, both for drainage as well as root space—18” to 20”, deeper if my back co-operates, or I hit unwanted invading roots. I break up dirt clumps, remove and discard fist-sized and larger rocks, along with roots, dog bones, old construction materials, etc., but keep any pirate treasure I find. The bottom few inches of clay is usually of a lighter color and poorer quality; if any soil gets discarded from the project, this is it. One caution: If you use a rototiller, don’t overdo the tilling until the soil becomes like powder. Uneven pieces help prevent re-compaction. Then I layer in soil and compost, mix with the shovel, water in well, and continue mixing layers with watering until done.

Following this principle, if you are planning a single hole for a single rose plant, then make it a Big Hole—like 24” wide, 15” to 18” deep, larger if you can. This improves drainage, and allows the plant room to mature and thrive before the roots encounter any surrounding, poorer soil. The first rose I planted died because the hole was too small and I didn’t add enough organic material. Plus, the rose was of poor quality, but we’ll cover that next month.

Secret Tip—The best garden soil is composed of up to 50% air and water. That much? Yes! And this space does not come from your spade work, since newly prepared soil settles with time and watering (watering breaks down unnecessary air pockets, plus water weighs 8 lbs per gallon—think about what 10 gallons of water does to newly turned soil). Instead, networks of tiny spaces are developed over time by all the living organisms at work in your soil. This allows oxygen and water to enter, and is the best kind of environment to turn hungry and thirsty rose roots loose in.

Magic Formula—The more you do below ground for the plant parts you can't see (the roots), the better the parts you can see (the flowers) will do. And don't just take my word. Ask around, assemble advice, then grab your shovel. Does this sound like a lot of work? Depending on the size of the project, it can be. But let me make this promise: the research and work you put in to build a good garden environment now will be repaid many times over the next few years.

Existing Gardens

If you have some roses already, either old or recent, here's what to do in February, or as soon as the snow is gone:

1. Clean! Go out on a decent day and strip off all the old leaves, and carefully clean up leaves and debris from the ground around the plants. This will remove a lot of disease spores and insect eggs, and may be the single best thing you can do for your existing roses this Spring. Dave's Golden Rule: Cleanliness is next to healthiness. And wear good gloves when you do this. I've discovered that rose prickles do not take the winter off.
2. If you've moved into a house with an established garden, consider getting a soil test at a local nursery so you know where you stand with your soil.
3. Check for water. Dig down 3 or 4 inches in several places and feel the soil. Moist? Dry? More roses are lost during winter for lack of water than anything else. Water, if needed, and keep checking as temperatures warm this Spring, since watering needs change as the days lengthen and temperatures warm.
4. Mulch. Does your garden have a good 3 inches or more layer of mulch over the soil? Mulch can help hold in water, and limit winter damage at the base of plants. In my gardens, the most damaging time is starting right now—the freeze/thaw cycles. Warm, sunny days and nights above freezing encourage the plants to leave dormancy—canes swell with water, new growth (up to 90% water) sprouts, and then Wham! Several days with lows near zero, highs in the 20's. (As a mail carrier, I hate these cycles, too!) New growth and some healthy canes freeze, cells burst and die. A plant that looks fine in January develops black patches and dead canes by April. This is a normal part of Denver's climate; the best thing you can do is to protect the base of your plants, particularly if the varieties and hardiness are unknown, with a good mound of mulch around the bottom of the plant. If the base is healthy, the plant will rebound in the Spring when we prune. And speaking of pruning—
5. Don't prune! It's too early. Cutting a healthy green cane can signal the plant to start growing, and right now that's a Bad Idea. You want them to stay dormant. If you have broken canes, cut them at the break to keep them from whipping around in the wind and damaging healthy canes, but otherwise, don't cut anything. We'll cover pruning later, and do it in early May, when the danger of frost passes.
6. A word on snow. Snow makes a great accessory mulch. Snow covers the plant bases, and helps protect them from extreme temperatures. And although snow often does not contain much moisture, it does help water the garden as it melts. However, heavy, wet snows can break canes that still have a lot of leaves on them, so in future years, consider stripping the plants as soon as they go dormant and the leaves droop, usually by mid-November. But overall, snow's great, as long as your soil drainage is, too.

Next Article—You have planned, dug, and sweated over your new garden. Now let's talk some more about the plants that are going in it! Also, in my garden, some of my rose plants look like they are ready to sprout new growth. Is this a good thing, or a bad thing?

POOR DAVID'S ALMANAC

BY DAVE INGRAM, CONSULTING ROSARIAN

*"Gardeners beware: Don't be fooled,
That which has warmed will yet be cooled."*

Getting Started With Roses – Volume II



This article, aimed at new rose growers, should be used in conjunction with your copy of *"Growing Roses in Colorado."* Last article we covered planning and preparing new gardens, along with what to do with roses you already have.

New Gardens

If you're like me when you laid out your new rose bed, you probably changed your mind about rose selection a bunch of times. That's okay (as long as the men with the butterfly nets don't find out), but keep in mind, pretty pictures in a book do not always mean pretty flowers in Denver. We are a high-plains, semi-arid location with hot, dry summer days and cold, windy, changeable winters (USDA Zone 5). So let me propose three categories to evaluate roses in our area:

1. Hardy—comes through the winter with little cane damage; at most, no more than half.
2. Half-hardy—canes always die back by at least half, and may die back to the ground, but if planted and protected properly, the plant survives just fine and storms back.
3. Tender—Not able to survive our winters. You'll rarely find these plants for sale in Denver, but they are available over the internet.

To find hardy roses, research groups like the Canadian Explorer and Morden series, the Buck roses, and certain German re-releases. These tend to grow in shrub form, and have simpler—but still lovely—flowers. The best source I have found locally is Harlequin Nurseries, located just north of Boulder. They specialize in hardy roses.

Hardy Tip: The only real way to know if a rose is hardy in our climate is to ask your fellow Society members, Consulting Rosarians, and qualified nursery pros. We've grown them, and know what happens here. Someone writing a book in Georgia does not. Barring that, the lower the winter rating (say, Zone 3), the more likely the rose is to be fully hardy here in Zone 5. Consider miniatures—many are tough little guys, a lot harder than they look.

Most of us grow at least some half-hardy roses, such as Hybrid Teas and Floribundas. You'll find these for sale in most garden centers and account for more than half of roses sold locally. Most grow great in our area. But be aware—along with to-die-for flowers come genes for temperature sensitivity. Mine need more careful pruning, feeding and watering to do their best. But oh my, the flowers! I grow a lot of them. They are worth the effort. Don't be afraid of them!

Half-hardy Tip: The secret to growing great Hybrid Teas and Floribundas is to plant them properly in good soil, pay attention to them, and provide some winter protection. You'll find all this information in *"Growing Roses in Colorado."*

Remember plant spacing! As we mentioned last month, overcrowded plants cause problems you don't need. So learn the plant habits from *"Growing Roses,"* and ask questions from local nurseries, who are used to the sizes plants reach in this area.

Planning Tip: Put stakes in your new garden to show plant location, and no matter how empty it looks, trust your research.

Once you've decided on your varieties and how many will fit (Poor David usually needs to be chained to a post until he makes up his mind), where do you find your plants? By this time of year, most local garden centers know exactly what they'll carry, and a call or a visit can whittle down your dream list. And for a new rose grower, here is the crux of my advice for this month.

Golden Tip: Set aside the time and the money to find the best plants available. Buy only #1 grade roses from local garden centers that know how to grow and maintain the best plants, and stand behind them. If you start with cheaper or lesser plants and they don't perform, you'll never know -is it the plant, or me?

Which brings up this question: What about the big box stores? My experience has been that a nation-wide chain often stocks at least some roses not appropriate for the Denver area. Employees may not know what they are getting in until the shipment arrives. And if the plants have been damaged en route by temperature, rough handling or lack of water, they may sit there on the pallet lookin' pretty, but deteriorate once you plant them in the ground. Also, in some cases, the big box stores save money by bringing in lesser quality plants, like Grades #1½ or #2. These rarely perform like the best #1 Grade plants. These roses can be a great way to save money once you have some experience, but when you are just starting, why ask for trouble?

Existing Gardens

1. As the days lengthen and we start to get warmer days in March, dig into the soil to check for moisture more often. Don't say, "Oh, they look like they could use some water."
2. Make sure the protective mulch is intact.
3. Keep the garden surface as clean as possible.
4. Only cut canes that are broken at the place they snapped. Cutting a living rose cane now may send a chemical signal to the plant to grow, and as we covered in the last article, right now that will just cause trouble. As it is, I'm seeing the first signs of life in my gardens; some of the half-hardy plants are starting to sputter out of dormancy, fooled by the occasional warm, sunny days, and it's too early for them to succeed at that. The canes swell with water, send out new growth, and then the freezing temperatures that we still get until around Mother's Day destroy the new growth before it can mature, and may damage the older canes. In my garden, I find this is the biggest reason I have to prune half-hardy roses so much. Yes, they are more vulnerable to winter temperatures and drying winter winds, but they also struggle with the freeze-thaw cycles we get in March and April.

Our strategy this month is to make sure the plant roots do not dry out, and have enough of a protective mound of mulch at their base to ensure the rose can come back from the ground, if necessary, no matter what happens. Be patient. In the next article, we'll turn you loose with pruning shears and fertilizer to get those babies fired up and blooming for this year.

Next article—Do you know there are two different types of rose plants offered by nurseries?

Next article—We will explain own root vs. grafted roses. And we'll do a little primer on that mysterious process called pruning.

POOR DAVID'S ALMANAC

BY DAVE INGRAM, CONSULTING ROSARIAN

*"The Gardener's Job:
To prune the strains of time away,
A great tomorrow begins today."*

Getting Started With Roses – Volume III



Last article we talked about rose hardiness, and I shared my best tip to help you shop for your first plants. We also outlined a strategy for existing roses in your garden in the early spring. Visit www.denverrosesociety.org for information on how to obtain the *Growing Roses In Colorado* book.

It is my goal to share with you some of the things I learned as a non-gardener starting with roses. But here is my secret agenda! These articles don't have all the answers, and if I'm lucky, they'll make you think of a lot of questions.

Secret Tip: Read through *Growing Roses in Colorado* for more answers; then write your remaining questions down and ask us! Ask by e-mail or over the phone. Ask at meetings. If we have our name badges on, push us against the wall and demand answers!

New Gardens

As the days begin to warm in April, that new garden you prepared should be growing a lot of worms and microorganisms, so when we plant in May, the soil will be ready to help your new roses get off to a flying start. Make sure the soil stays moist, and look for any signs of drainage problems that need correcting before you plant. April is when a lot of garden centers put their roses out so you can look them over, although they may not release them for sale until later in the month. A couple of things to think about:

Buying Tip: The urge to buy this month is strong. When I see a rose I want, my hand starts straying toward my wallet. Keep in mind, we're not going to plant until around Mother's Day in May. If you take the rose home early, you'll just have to take care of it. I learned to let the garden center do the work until late in the month, unless I find the perfect plant or they are low on selection. Or I just can't stand it.

Buying Tip: Some garden centers grow their roses indoors in a greenhouse environment. That means the plant will have to be "hardened off" by gradual exposure to the outdoors over a week or so. Get a copy of the garden center's hardening off instructions, so you know what's required. Also, find out whether you'll have to feed your new rose this year, after planting. Some garden centers use time-release fertilizer when they pot the rose. If so, more feeding is unnecessary, and may even be harmful. As we mentioned last article, there are two types of rose plants offered for sale. You should know and understand the difference:

Own Root: A cutting from a mother plant is rooted and grown into a saleable plant. This can be a costly and time-consuming process; own-root plants are commonly smaller at purchase time and may need three years or more to reach mature size. Many of us believe that own-root plants are healthier and superior in the long run, since if a terrible winter kills the plant to the ground, it can grow back from the stem underground. Most of my large shrubs and antique roses are on their own roots. The source of hardy roses I mentioned last article,

Harlequin Nurseries, only sells own-root, Colorado hardy roses. If you're looking for this type of plant, that's a potent combination.

Grafted Roses: For many years, this was the industry standard, and still is with Hybrid Teas and Floribundas. Start with a vigorous root stock like "Dr. Huey" that grows like a weed and can send canes out 12 to 20 feet. Take a small cutting of a Hybrid Tea variety like "Peace" and splice it (graft it) onto the root stock, and once it "takes," cut away everything else and pretty soon - Voila! A new "Peace" rose. Why do it this way? Time and money. You can turn out far more saleable plants in less time. Also, certain Hybrid Teas and Floribundas grow better when grafted. There are two main drawbacks. If the graft union freezes and dies, the named variety is lost and next year you might have the root stock growing like crazy all over your yard. Also, sometimes the root stock will send up a separate shoot called a sucker that has to be cut away at the place it started underground (a hassle). If you're planning to buy some Hybrid Teas and Floribundas, they'll probably be grafted plants. Here's my advice:

Grafted Rose Tip: When we plant in May, we'll follow the guidelines in *Growing Roses in Colorado* to plant the graft union 1 to 3 inches underground. That minimizes or eliminates the drawbacks, and sets you up to grow a beautiful rose that will last you many years.

Buying Tips: If you decide to buy roses before the end of April, here's what I do. I ignore any buds or flowers at the top of the plant. No matter how beautiful now, they'll be gone quickly. I only look at the base, from the soil to about a foot up. That's the part you'll be dealing with as long as you own the plant. Look for three strong healthy canes coming out of the graft union (the "knot" just above soil level), or good branching on an own-root plant (all miniatures are on their own roots). Air should be able to circulate; the canes should not rub. Once you get the plant home, water it. Never let a day go by without checking the pot for water. That is what garden centers do; now it's your job.

Existing Gardens

In early May, after the danger of frost has passed, you will have to cut your roses back. This process is called pruning. We all do this to our roses, but the first couple of times can be a bit unnerving. What? Cut my plant? It's just starting to grow! But good pruning can help all roses grow much better. *Growing Roses in Colorado* explains the details of this process; but think of it this way, your roses spend the summer growing however they want, then they spend the winter paying for it. When you study them in April, even with the hardiest shrubs, you'll see places where canes have grown across each other and are rubbing (bad thing), other places that have weak, spindly growth, often in the center of the plant that impedes air circulation (think fungal diseases). Plus, any canes that have died over the winter have to go. And when you evaluate half-hardy roses like Hybrid Teas, you'll probably notice that much of the upper growth has browned and died, and even the green canes may have browned or have blackened splotches on them, which is a sign of cell destruction.

Pruning Tip: Prune for the future. By cutting out dead, winter damaged, weak, or unruly growth, you set your rose up to have the healthiest, happiest flowering year possible.

Beginner's Tip: When you cut into good, living wood, it sends a chemical signal to the plant to grow. When you are just starting out with roses, it's best to send this signal after the danger of frost has passed, generally around Mother's Day. Remember, most new growth is around 90% water, and very frost sensitive. You'll figure out soon enough which of your roses are hardier, and can be pruned earlier. But the first year or two, let's be cautious.

Pruning Tip: Plan to prune out the oldest canes of inherited plants to help renew the plant with young, fresh growth.

Pruning Tip: Many rosarians cut their hardy shrubs back by one-third to encourage a good flush of new growth. Keep in mind though, you can't train a rose just by cutting it. You may open up an area, but then the rose will grow as it wants. I suppose it's a bit like lion taming (there is no truth to the rumor that Poor David goes out to prune with a chair and a whip).

Pruning Tip: Don't be afraid to prune for balance. Example: Take one of my Hybrid Teas, say with 4 ft. canes, one cane might be brown (dead) to just above the mulch, the next might be green with new growth (!!!) near the top, but ugly black or brown dead splotches a foot off the ground (this cane probably has to go—too damaged and weak to survive the summer, despite that new growth), and a third cane that looks perfectly healthy. I cut the first brown cane until I reach good, green wood (if possible), cut the second cane below the dead splotches, check the condition of the wood, then work my way down a few inches at a time to good wood. Then I try to steel my nerves and cut the third cane (sob!) to match the first two. This makes for a balanced, attractive bush that will grow back faster than you think. What? Cut away any new growth that might flower? Art thou kidding? Nope, not kidding . . . think of two soda straws – one clear and open, one clogged with enough tissue to impede most of the soda. Half-hardy roses like Hybrid Teas and Floribundas rarely make it through the winter with open, healthy straws. Any dead tissue acts like a clog. These roses are tough—they'll try to grow anyway, no matter how hard it is. But the kindest thing you can do is cut below the clogs to fresh, good wood. This will encourage the plant to grow more actively and maybe put out new growth from ground level (basal breaks - great thing!) You'll get a lot more flowers over the summer and lower the stress on the plant (which should mean less disease and insect problems - good thing).

Last Tip: Pruning roses with dull shears is almost as bad as not pruning them at all. Before you start, get your pruning shears as sharp as you can. Want some hands-on instruction and practice on how to prune? The Denver Rose Society hosts an annual Pruning Demo at the Jefferson County Detention Center in late April. Check the DRS website calendar for schedule and details. Bring your pruners (or, if you haven't bought any yet, you can learn what kind to buy) and we'll show you how to make the right cuts to the right wood, and let you try some yourself. Come join us, and trade your uncertainty for some experience, as you prepare to wade into your garden in May.

Next article: All those new roses you begin to accumulate toward the end of the month? We'll roll up our sleeves and stick those babies in the ground! And for existing roses, my theory is, if you're pruning 'em, you might as well feed 'em. So we'll cover that.

POOR DAVID'S ALMANAC

BY DAVE INGRAM, CONSULTING ROSARIAN

*"When gardeners start to plant and prune,
The flowers will be coming soon."*

Getting Started With Roses – Volume IV



In this series for beginning rose growers, we talked last article about shopping for roses, and explained the difference between grafted and own-root plants. We also covered how to prune any existing roses you may have, which we are going to try to do in May.

Each article we always start by reminding you purchase and read through the guide *"Growing Roses In Colorado"*, published by The Denver Rose Society. These "Getting Started" articles reflect my experiences learning about rose growing, and are designed to complement *"Growing Roses,"* not replace it. This is particularly important, as we get ready to plant new roses and prune and feed existing plants.

New Gardens

Let's review for a moment. You have dug and prepared your new garden or planting holes, and that soil is busy right now growing microorganisms and breaking down organic matter—good soil is a living thing that interacts with your plants. You have decided on varieties, studied their mature sizes, and used stakes to mark their places in the garden so they won't be overcrowd. You have found one or more garden centers that only stock #1 Grade roses, and hopefully you have visited those centers and practiced selecting good, healthy plants.

So, if you haven't already begun purchasing the new rose plants for your garden, now is the time to begin. Try to choose not just the biggest or the prettiest plant, but the one that is healthiest and strongest at the base, the part you will have to live with. Find out if the plants you are buying are grafted or own root. It matters when we plant. And remember, when you get your new roses home, water them!

Buying Tip: Get any care sheets available from the nursery, particularly on hardening off, if the plant has been grown indoors. This needs to be done before planting to prevent further shock to a plant that is going to be shocked enough when we stick it in the ground.

Depending on how the weather goes this year (a very unreliable subject in these parts), if you buy plants from a place like Harlequin or Paulino's that usually stores their roses outside (and won't need to be hardened off), you can probably plant anytime in May. Roses that need hardening off are probably best planted on or after Mother's Day, the traditional end of freezing weather in the Denver area. You want your plants to have time to establish in the ground before the hot weather hits at the end of June, but it's not a good idea to have roses newly planted if a hard freeze is still expected.

After all the work you have already done, planting is easy! The first thing I do on planting morning is water each rose. And you want your garden soil moist, but not soggy. Water is the great "shock absorber" for any major changes to a plant's environment. Now, dig your planting hole twice the width of the pot. Gently ease the rose out of the pot. Don't expose the roots to a lot of direct sunlight (BAD THING). Lay a shovel handle or

other straight-edge over the top of the hole, and adjust the base of the planting hole so the graft union of the rose (the knot the branches come out of) is 1 to 3 inches below the soil surface (this helps the graft survive our winters). Own-root plants (miniatures are own root) should be placed so the branching point is 1 inch below surface level. Now, slowly backfill with soil halfway and water until it is soupy. I like to poke my fingers around gently to make sure the soil is settled around the root ball. The danger in planting is leaving air pockets that cannot support root growth. Once the water drains, add more backfill and water, until done. I no longer tamp the soil down around the plant with my hands (and never use your feet!), to avoid compacting. Water and gravity should settle the soil just fine (remember, a good soil is up to 50% air and water). Take the wire name tag off and attach it to a stake nearby (the wire can damage the cane over time). I like to mound extra soil over the plant, and form a basin around the edge to guide future watering around the rootball. Then mulch well, several inches deep. This helps hold moisture in, and insulates the new rose against the nasty, real world as the roots take hold. You know, there are times when I wish I had a good mulch to protect me from the real world, too.

Any magic formulas to add to the planting hole? Not really, there is nothing magical about this process. A couple of tablespoons of super phosphate in the base of the hole (under the new plant) can provide a source of that nutrient for several years. And I usually add a little organic food such as Mile-Hi Rose Feed to the backfill to help feed the soil microbes that was disturbed. Have some food available for the new roots as they poke their noses into their new home (and away from any time-release food in the root ball). I guess a little root-stimulator in the water you use to settle the plant never hurt anything. But none of that is critical. Remember, it's not the additives, it's the care in preparation and planting that makes the difference.

Follow the “*Growing Roses*” guide for follow-up watering. Your new plant is vulnerable right now. Both over and under watering can harm or kill it, so learn your roses’ watering needs by sticking your fingers into the soil to learn moisture levels. Once the rose is well established, it will be a tough little warrior.

Existing Gardens

The first thing I do as I approach the time to prune my roses is to look the plants over a couple of days before to roughly plan out what each one needs to be prepared for the coming summer.

Pruning Plan:

1. Water—the plants the day before to help guard against shock.
2. Prune—without trampling and compacting the soil around the plant (pruning solves one problem, but soil compaction causes another. Remember the 50% rule).
3. Feed—the rose to help it start growing.
4. Water again—to move liquid food down into the root zone, or to help organic foods settle in.

If you have never pruned before, then I say wait until the last danger of frost has passed (our average last frost is around the middle of May). If your best guess is that frost is over (and in this state, even the pros can only guess), then get out there and have at it! Re-read “*Growing Roses*” article on pruning, and try to wade through the last article for more help.

Pruning Tip: *Relax!* If your roses have made it this far, through hot summers and long, cold, change-able winters, then I doubt you will do them any lasting damage while pruning. I have made many “accidental” cuts that I thought were disasters at the time (provoking those short, one word outbursts you don’t want others to hear), but a lot of them turned out to be the work of genius by the end of summer. Go for it! You will learn from what you do right, as well as wrong.

Pruning Reminder: With shrubs, cut out dead wood, crossing canes, and weak, spindly growth. With half-hardy Hybrid Teas and Floribundas, keep cutting until you reach fresh, whitish wood, even if this takes you close to the ground. Try to cut to bud eyes (where the new growth will sprout from) that face outward. Open the centers. Prune for the future. And use sharp shears!

Pruning Tip: Seal the cut ends of the canes with Elmer's Glue or colored nail polish. This keeps cane-boring wasps from drilling into the ends of your canes to lay their eggs (BAD THING).

Pruning Tip: Some of us prune climbers after first bloom (this might take you into July). This gives you the maximum bloom now, and lets you decide how you want the plant to look next year. Also, prune once-bloomers after they bloom, and just before they start next year's growth. Think bloom, prune, and let 'em grow for next year's bloom.

Feeding: As you learned from "*Growing Roses*," there are a lot of ways to feed a rose bush. If you are just starting out, then here's my advice. Pick a simple fertilizing plan, and stick to it. This will help you learn what works about your plan, as well as what does not. Some of us like to use an organic food like the Mile-Hi Rose products (slow starting, longer lasting = fewer doses). Others use chemical fertilizers like Miracle Gro (fast acting, shorter duration = more doses). Time-release pellets are convenient now, but no one knows how accurate the "time-release" is, and keep in mind I'm going to tell you later not to feed past August 15th.

Start by leveling out the mulch and soil around the rose bed (except for newly planted roses). Winter's over, so the mulch can be at 2 to 3 inches throughout the bed. Liquid fertilizers can be poured right through the mulch, then watered down into the root zone, but for organics, you should pull the mulch back from the plant, scratch the food into the soil (Yeah, feed those soil organisms! I always like to think of baby birds in the nest, mouths agape, waiting for momma to feed them). Then re-install the mulch, and water to settle and moisten the fertilizer.

Feeding Tip: Be sure to follow the fertilizer instructions. Too much fertilizer can be worse than too little. And remember, miniatures need ½ or less of a regular dose. Give them the children's dose. They'll do fine.

Feeding Rule: The feeding of roses is all about: (1) balance, (2) consistency, and (3) plenty of water.

Inherited or Neglected Plants: If a rose has spent several years under duress from neglect, you can't bring it back with a single dose of fertilizer (a starving person needs to be built up with a variety of broths and light foods before they can handle a steak). So spend this year watering often, build the soil life with generous amounts of organic matter like compost, then add organic food (slow release) or bi-weekly doses of ½ strength, maybe even 1/4 strength liquid fertilizers, until the plant shows you how it is able to re-pond. Prune lightly (if at all), until it is clear where the new growth will come from, then cut to that growth. If the roses you have inherited look healthy enough, then be generous with feeding the soil, and prune and feed the roses normally.

Next article: Wow! Look at those roses growing like weeds!! Don't they look great? Yep, that's probably what all the ravenous insects are thinking that are getting ready to head toward your garden. We'll talk about strategies to deal with them. Isn't summer sooo overrated? All that heat and bugs. Yuck!

THANK GOODNESS FOR ROSES AND ICE CREAM!

POOR DAVID'S ALMANAC

BY DAVE INGRAM, CONSULTING ROSARIAN

*"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure
Tend your roses early so that they may endure."*

Getting Started With Roses – Volume V



First Timer's Growing Tip: Fertilize for the last time between August 1 and 15. Why?

Think: Watery new growth vs. early hard frosts = Bad Thing (we will talk more about this next article).

When rainfall totals are below average, you will need to dig into the soil to check your watering needs often. Hopefully you have discovered a good cover of mulch can make a big difference in saving water and lowering heat stress on your plants.

And stress matters, because in this article we will talk about Bad Things that Happen to Rose Plants and outline an approach to deal with them. Basically, Bad Things fall into two categories: Pests (bugs) and Diseases (fungus). Most of these problems and solutions are covered in *Growing Roses in Colorado*. Nursery centers also can help identify and offer remedies, as can our Society's Consulting Rosarians.

Most bugs are members of the Insect and Arachnid (spider) families. Insects and arachnids are probably the most successful species ever to populate planet Earth. They are very good at what they do, and what they do best is eat, and reproduce. Only a relatively few species specialize in eating your roses. Nonetheless, they can do a lot of damage.

One key to bug control is the Law of the Jungle. Yes folks, it is a jungle out there. As with most life on our world, bugs fall loosely into groupings of Predator and Prey. For every insect like an aphid or arachnid like a spider mite, there are other insects like lady beetles (ladybugs), lacewings, and certain wasps that prey on these guys, sometimes at different phases of their life cycles. In a perfect situation, this natural balancing act keeps the number of bad bugs at manageable levels. It is useful to learn how to maintain this balance in your garden. But all too often, factors like weather and human action disrupt this delicate mobile. So what do we do?

Pest Management Tip: In my opinion, the best way to reduce your exposure to insect pests and fungal diseases is to grow the healthiest, happiest roses you can. Believe me, even that is no guarantee. But healthy plants seem to attract fewer problems. When health is not enough—

First Rule of Pest and Disease Management:

You have to pay attention. I want to introduce you to an idea called Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Simply, IPM works like this:

1. Monitor your garden.
2. Notice a possible problem.
3. Identify the work of a pest.
4. Decide whether to treat, and if so—then how and when to treat and start with the least toxic method.
5. Monitor the results of your actions, and continue to watch for new problems.

It is really a simple method. Good gardeners go into their gardens a lot, often daily. I like to wander among the plants before work, coffee cup in hand, to admire the flowers, throw a little water around, and look over the buds and foliage to make sure everything is healthy and happy. It just takes a few minutes. If I notice some aphids on a bud, I can brush them off or smoosh them with my thumb. If I find a lot of aphids (they can multiply very rapidly), I wash them off with a stream of hose water (they can't crawl back). Spider mites also cannot tolerate water streams. Soap sprays work and are pretty safe. Get the idea? Start simply and safely, whenever possible.

The Fungus Among Us: The main rose fungal diseases in our area are Powdery Mildew and Black Spot (look them up in *Growing Roses*). These diseases have no natural predators, except that a healthy plant can better fight them off, or slow their spread. So monitoring is important. Most commonly, Powdery Mildew starts at the top of the plant, on the newest leaves and buds. Black Spot often shows at the bottom, then works its way up. They may not kill your roses directly, but they can weaken the plants to the point that winter will finish them off.

The #1 way to minimize fungal diseases in your rose garden is to clean up year round (old leaves and cane debris that may harbor disease spores). You also can prune to improve air circulation in the center of an overgrown bush. If a disease shows up, you can snip off infected leaves and stems, and maybe spray the plant to keep new infections away. Most fungicidal sprays are preventative (they can't kill the fungus). There's a product called Messenger (quite safe) that bolsters the plant's immune system. Some oils, like neem oil, can slow or keep fungus away. Treatment options range all the way up to fairly toxic materials that need gloves and even a respirator to handle safely. Always read and follow the label instructions on any product you use!

Second Rule of Pest and Disease Management:

Ask questions, of yourself and others, to learn what you are seeing, and what you should do about it. Lessons learned this year will benefit you for the rest of your life. Learn to recognize the beneficial predators, and realize the only reason they will stay in your garden is if there is something for them to eat. Your job is to learn how to keep their food supply manageable.

Learn not to freak out if a leafcutter bee uses a bit of your leaf for her nest. Seal the ends of fresh-cut canes to prevent cane borer damage. There is an entire ladder of remedies for insect pests and fungal diseases that range from doing nothing, right up to serious chemical concentrates that require gloves, mask and heavy clothing to use. Your job as a gardener is to decide how far up each ladder you want to climb to be effective, while staying safe.

Don't be alarmed by all this. The first time you encounter a problem, it can be time-consuming and stressful to learn the solutions. But you are surrounded by a network of people who can help you, and before you know it, you will be helping others with what you have learned. For me, the joy of gardening is as much about the knowledge I can share with other people, as the growth and flowers I get from my plants.

Next Article: In September, it cools off—and sometimes it even snows! We will cover tips to help you start preparing for Old Man Winter.

POOR DAVID'S ALMANAC

BY DAVE INGRAM, CONSULTING ROSARIAN

*"Jack Frost's on his way, To force winter's slumber.
Fair warning to us, 'Tis the end of summer."*

Getting Started With Roses – Volume VI



Last article, we suggested you try the Integrated Pest Management approach when dealing with pests and diseases of roses, as outlined in your copy of *"Growing Roses in Colorado."* Keep in mind that, in my garden at least, fall is a prime season for mildew and blackspot outbreaks. So far, my low-toxic program of continual monitoring, gardening to reduce plant stress, cleaning up of debris, spraying with Messenger every three weeks (to boost the plant's immune system), and relentless attacks with a quart spray bottle of Green Light Neem Oil (Lowe's) whenever mildew shows up ('First Prize' and 'Tropicana' are "indicator plants" for me) has kept my garden of 100 or so plants mostly disease free (knock, knock on wood, wood). I also grow two roses, 'Soleil d'Or' and 'Austrian Copper,' which are notorious blackspot magnets. Recently, I stripped off some lower leaves that were too near the ground (blackspot spores often splash up from the soil), and have been spraying the bottom half of the plants with neem oil to try to minimize infection. Note that with these two plants, I did not say, "prevent."

When you set up your garden this spring, if you took our advice to select healthy plants from a local nursery, then planted them in good soil with proper spacing, you may not have any of these problems. If so, congratulations! If not, remember that our network of Consulting Rosarians and other Society members can help answer your questions, and ease your learning frustrations.

Cold Warning: The main issue we have to deal with this month is preparing for cold. The record for the earliest freeze is September 9, but we have reached 26 degrees on the 14th, and 14 degrees on the 29th. By October, the average low is 33 degrees. Winter's coming, folks—now is the time to start preparing.

Winterizing Plan: For me, the Number 1 way to help get your plants through the winter intact is to send them into winter in the healthiest condition possible. Managing fungal diseases and deadheading under the flowers maximizes available leaf surfaces. More leaves helps the rose produce more food. Sure, some of that food will be used for growth and flowers. But the rest will be stored within the plant to help it survive the winter. No form of winter protection I know of will ensure that a struggling rose survives. And a strong, healthy rose may only need for you to leave it alone.

Fall Tips:

1. We advise that you not feed your roses after August 15.
2. As daily temperatures fall, ease back on your watering. The idea is to slowly toughen up this year's tender growth.
3. Particularly with newer plants, deadhead beneath flower heads (if you deadhead at all), rather than to a 5-leaflet leaf. This slows the stimulation of new growth.
4. Some repeat-blooming roses develop seed heads after blooming; late September is the right time to let them do so. This will also slow growth.
5. By all means, let your roses flower as much as they'd like, but don't force them to. Fall should be like a long, slow lullaby for your garden.

Fall, without the heat stress, is a wonderful time for rose flowers. Many of your plants will just explode with color. But remember what I said last spring about freezes and new, water-swollen growth? That advice still applies, so here's September's heartbreaking tip:

Freeze Warning: If you notice strong, new growth starting from the base of the plant (basal breaks), you need to snap or cut it off (and seal the pruning wound). New basal growth may take more than 50 days to bloom, and we might not have that much time before the whole cane freezes, possibly damaging the entire plant. Even if it does bloom, the cane will not be mature enough to make it through the winter. So let the plant bloom on the canes that are already in place, you'll still get plenty of flowers. Our job with winterizing is to make sure the base of the rose is safe.

Smart Tip: Check at the base of each rose plant. Has the graft union emerged? Sometimes soil settles or gets washed away during the summer. If necessary, throw a couple of shovelfuls of dirt (not mulch) down to rebury the graft (or own-root growth point) to the proper depth.

Can you plant roses in the fall? Dickey subject. Many authorities say no. Our winters are too long and harsh for roses not well established. My experience has been that I've had a lot of trouble getting newly planted Hybrid Teas and Floribundas through the winter alive, no matter what I have done to protect them. But hardy shrubs and miniatures usually survive (Remember, my garden conditions may be different than yours). If you want to try, no guarantees, but here are some tips to succeed:

- ☛ Plant early—as soon after Labor Day as the heat allows.
- ☛ A rose that's been in a pot all summer may be badly “root bound.” A few wounding slices through the surface of the root ball will encourage the roots to grow out into the surrounding soil.
- ☛ Try a mycorrhizae product around the plant roots. (my-core-AYE-zah, a beneficial root fungus.) Your local nursery can help you select one. This should help the roots develop faster during the short fall season.
- ☛ Mulch deeply to protect the plant through erratic weather conditions.
- ☛ Be prepared to protect plants against early snows.
- ☛ Water very carefully. Remember, it's getting colder, not warmer.
- ☛ Good luck.

Snow Warning: Snow? Already? Yep! Some years, we've had heavy, wet snowfalls in late September, the kind that break tree limbs and destroy awnings. What should you do if a storm is forecast?

1. Make sure your mulch is to the proper depth, or more.
2. Securely tie all climber canes to the trellis.
3. If you are worried about your Hybrid Teas and Floribundas with stiffer canes, you can drive a stake into the ground and tie the canes to the stake.
4. Most roses are flexible enough to handle at least some snow. You might get a snapped cane or two, and a little tip freeze.
5. Snow can act as an insulation blanket, and is a fine source of water as it melts. To the prepared gardener, snow can be your friend.

New Garden Plan: Fall is an ideal time to begin work on a new garden that can hold lots of new roses! The mellow temperatures are easier on you as you dig, and the soil has a chance to settle and develop microorganisms over the fall and winter, while you're inside by the fire, shopping through catalogs for your new plants. By next May, you'll have a well-developed soil structure ready to welcome your new roses.

Next Article: Poor David's Winterizing Checklist! (This may include Hot Apple Cider for the gardener!)

POOR DAVID'S ALMANAC

BY DAVE INGRAM, CONSULTING ROSARIAN

"Diligence Dodges Destruction"

Getting Started With Roses – Volume VII



Checklist for Winterizing your Roses:

___ 1. Start by giving yourself a big fat checkmark (✓) for doing a great job this year! You have dug, amended, selected, planted, watered and fed, and monitored for insects and diseases. I am sure you have cut your share of pretty nice flowers. Whew! Well done! Now, let's get your precious little babies ready for the dark season.

___ 2. Evaluate your winter conditions. Do you own a thermometer so you know how cold it gets in your yard? Do you live at an elevation where it gets colder, or along a sunken stream bed where the cold sinks in? Are roses exposed to drying winds and long spells of spring sun? Are there fences and trees and houses around to help reduce wind? My yard has a 6 ft. fence around it, and the neighbors have trees and shrubs that help limit, but not prevent, exposure to wind. Many houses up north near Stanley Lake, where I sometimes deliver mail, are sitting ducks. The wind howls straight into their yards and the only thing between them and the North Pole is some clouds.

Rate the following conditions in your yard by: (A) Good protection, (B) Some protection, (C) Mostly exposed, (D) Very exposed, and (F) Time to sell the house and move.

___ Cold ___ Wind ___ Sun (Freeze/Thaw) (We'll refer back to these.)

Happy Plant Tip: Remember what we said last article, the best way to get roses through the winter alive is to send them into winter as healthy as possible. A robust plant with lots of leaves in October (and a limited amount of tender new growth, mostly at the top) is one I'll bet you see again next spring.

___ 3. No feeding after August 15. Let the roses use up what is there; it will take them awhile in the cooler temps. You will still get a lot of flowers. KEY -Don't encourage your plants to grow when they should be slowing down.

___ 4. Ease back on watering. You want the roses to harden off, but -KEY - Never let them dry out!

___ 5. Remove strong new growth starting from the base of the plant (basal breaks). As fall progresses, consider removing most new breaks from the bottom half of the plant. This will help harden off the base, and remember KEY -winterizing is all about protecting the base of the rose, particularly the first year.

___ 6. Other ways to slow roses down in October: A. Cut flowers with shorter stems or no stems. (Float the flower in a bowl or wine glass.) B. Leave more of the flowers on the plant. C. Deadhead just under the flower head, if you deadhead at all.

___ 7. Remember that as long as the plant is awake and growing, so are fungal diseases. Continue your monitoring and control measures.

___ 8. The first hard freeze will knock down most of the insects, both good and bad, but that won't put the plant into dormancy by itself. "Dormant does not mean Dead."

Tip: Think of dormancy as a process, not an event. It usually takes several nights of below 22 degrees in your yard for most roses to enter dormancy. Even after that, it may take awhile for them to finally shut down.

What I'm noticing is that some of the very winter hardy roses, such as William Baffin and Harison's Yellow, seem fully deciduous; meaning the leaves fall off easily and naturally. These roses usually have bare canes by Christmas. Many others, particularly the half-hardy Hybrid Teas and Floribundas, don't do that. The leaves will droop and slowly dry out, but sometimes hang on the bush until spring. Once dormancy sets in, and the danger of Indian Summer is past, go out and strip the plant leaves and thoroughly clean the beds (disease spores - remember?).

___9. Once you think the roses are dormant, usually by mid-November, pull back the mulch and put a 6 to 8 inch mound of soil around the base of each new, or half-hardy rose. (I put soil around the base of my hardy William Baffin the first winter - just in case. Now my winterizing plan for that plant is to laugh at it as I walk by.) Do Not get this soil from your rose bed (you might expose roots -Bad Thing). A soil mound gives extra protection to the graft or growth point from cold, wind, and sun (freeze/thaw).

___10. Deepen the layer of mulch over the entire bed, to give an extra layer of protection.

___11. Check for the amount of moisture during the winter and deep water when needed. Even dormant plants still metabolize, and roses suffer more cold damage in dry soil than in moist. I use the Holiday Schedule: I go out to the gardens and dig to check for water on Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas/New Year's, Martin Luther King and President's Day. However, water only on days where the temperature will be at least in the 40's for several hours.

Poor David's Hard Won Tip: If you take your trowel and march out bravely to check for water, and the ground is frozen, or there is snow covering the ground -STOP! -you don't need to water. In fact, turn around and go back inside. One of the important lessons in learning to be a good gardener is knowing when to get your butt inside, out of the cold.

The above checklist gives you Poor David's "Dirty Dozen" key points for getting roses through the winter in these here parts. (Poor David is so poor he can't even come up with a dozen key points.) What follows are some extra tips that may be useful, particularly if you had grades in number 2 above in the "C" or "D" range:

1. Wind is capable of rocking a plant until the roots tear loose or break, and the plant dies (Bad Thing). What some of us do with Hybrid Teas and Floribundas, once the rose is fully dormant, is cut the canes back to 2 to 3 feet, strip off the remaining foliage and clean the bed.
2. How stable is the trellis your climber is tied to? Will the wind topple it, which may pull the rose out of the ground and kill it (Bad Thing)?
3. Some of us recycle our Christmas trees (and the neighbor's) by cutting the branches off, and placing them around rose plants for extra protection from cold, wind and freeze/thaw.
4. Some rosarians wrap their trellises with burlap to help protect climber canes from cold, wind, and freeze/thaw.
5. With new rose bushes and Hybrid Teas and Floribundas that you think may be tender, you might place a stake near the center of the bush, strip the leaves (keep it clean!), trim and tie the canes to the stake, then wrap in burlap for the same reasons. This may help if your garden is very exposed.

Don't Get Carried Away Tip: But with the ebb and flow of a Rocky Mountain winter, and the low humidity that's normal here, you can't stop all the damage to half-hardy plants. (That's why I call them that.) A healthy rose will grow back like gangbusters from the base next spring (Good Thing), as long as the base survives.

6. If you've had a lot of trouble this year with mildew or black-spot, consider stripping the leaves (clean!) and trying a dormant oil spray on the canes. This can help incapacitate or kill overwintering disease spores. Ask questions at the store, and follow direction carefully.

Additional Tip: Consulting Rosarian Ellen Nielsen adds a note on how she winterizes her roses:
“Since we live in a windy area, the mulch we use to winterize our roses can easily be blown away if we don’t take special precautions. We make rose collars out of roofing felt we salvage from construction job dumpsters. Each collar is large enough in diameter to circle a rose at ground level and about 18 inches tall. We fill them with mulch and top with garden dirt to keep the mulch inside.”

Next article: “What’s Next?” Your faithful correspondent will try to lead you down the wayward path of Temptation and Potential Rose Addiction! No way you want to miss this one!

POOR DAVID'S ALMANAC

BY DAVE INGRAM, CONSULTING ROSARIAN

*"A garden complete (once greed besets thee),
Features roses as far as the eye can see."*

Getting Started With Roses – Volume VII



Internet Mail-Order Nurseries

I have read that over the years, more than 20,000 rose varieties have been introduced. Most of these have disappeared, but there are still several thousand cultivars available, and if you want, you can buy them all for your garden. Some are hundreds of years old and alive with history; others are brand new, the exciting work of today's top rose hybridizers. So, it is my happy duty to introduce you to a wonderful and hopeless addiction—endless roses!

If you have followed our articles this year, you have learned how to plant well-started, # 1 roses from local nurseries in your garden and succeed with them. That will always be your best road to success—that is why local nurseries are there. It is how I like to buy roses, despite the cost. But local nurseries can only offer the tip of the iceberg of all the varieties out there. And if nothing else, the websites I have listed here are a fine source of knowledge.

Be aware that most mail order nurseries offer first year rooted cuttings (own-root) for sale, much smaller and more fragile than what you have dealt with this year. These plants are shipped to you in quart-sized pots (generally 4" X 4" X 5" deep), often called "bands," to save shipping costs. The plants average maybe 6" to 8" in height, and they will need a couple of years of attention to reach the size of the roses you have put in this year, and maybe 3 to 5 years to reach full, mature size. Miniatures arrive in even smaller pots. But fear not—the same principles you have followed and the skills you have learned from the "*Growing Roses in Colorado*" book will help you succeed with these young cuttings.

Most of the nurseries listed below have been around for awhile; but with the economy as it is these days, the waves of change may drown some of them—so the old expression of "caveat emptor" is good advice. Several offer discounts to ARS members, another good reason to join the American Rose Society! Explore these sites, and follow their links for a journey full of history and beauty. First up, an index site:

- ☛ helpmefind.com/rose—a search site that has cataloged over 39,000 plants (roses, clematis and peonies), with over 86,000 photos. There are links to plant nurseries, public and private gardens, plant societies, and much more. A wonderful resource.
- ☛ High Country Roses—highcountryroses.com. 1-800-552-2082. Catalog available. Located in Jensen UT, with family ties to the DRS. We have sold their plants at our events for years, and I bet most of our members have at least one of their roses in their gardens. Over 250 varieties, mostly hardy in our climate—a factor you must be aware of. Great descriptions of each variety, with photos under a separate heading. Good selection, excellent service.

- ☛ Roses Unlimited—rosesunlimiteddownroot.com. 864-682-7673. Laurens, SC. Hundreds of varieties from all over the world. These are bigger plants in gallon pots; they cost more, and shipping costs are high. Good selection and good service from a modest website. Phone orders.
- ☛ Vintage Gardens—vintagegardens.com. 707-829-2035. Sebastopol, CA. The Big Daddy site. An historical treasure trove of over 3,500 varieties, offered mostly in bands, and a few gallons. The website alone is a “must visit.” Not all varieties offered each year; awesome selection and decent service on a great ordering site. But, these are small plants from a big operation, sent in an odd, gravelly soil mix in smallish pots. I have a lot of their plants in my garden, but I failed with some, too. After slow sales, the owner says he will decide May 2009 whether to stay in business. Order if you can — we need them to stick around.
- ☛ rosemania.com 1-888-600-9665. Franklin, TN. A big supporter of the ARS, this is a top site for ordering garden chemicals in quantity and other equipment. They also offer some bare-root roses, and a line of minis and mini/loras from top hybridizers. For me, a cutting-edge site; useful selection and great service on a great ordering site.
- ☛ Heirloom Roses—heirloomroses.com. 503-538-1576. St. Paul, OR. The late John Clements built this business on a fine selection of top varieties, along with his own introductions. Good service, good ordering site.
- ☛ John’s Miniatures - johnsminiatureroses.com. 1-800-820-0465. Same guy, different business, specializing in miniatures.
- ☛ Nor’East Miniature Roses—noreast-miniroses.com. 1-800-426-6485. Probably the top source of miniature roses. If you can’t find it here, or at John’s, then maybe you don’t need it. Great selection, service and on-site ordering.
- ☛ Northland Rosarium—northlandrosarium.com. 509-448-4968. Spokane, WA. Strong selection of Canadian, Kordes, and Griffith Buck (39 varieties) hardy roses, along with many others. Good service and on-site ordering.

Want more? Oh, I don’t know. Well . . . Okay!

- ☛ chambleeroses.com—Texas. Over 300 varieties, in gallons (high shipping).
- ☛ antiqueroseemporium.com—Texas. Good selection, in 2-gallon pots (higher shipping).
- ☛ roguevalleyroses.com—Oregon. About 1,200 varieties.
- ☛ davidaustrinroses.com/american—Texas. Catalog available. All those great English roses, produced here in the United States as grafted, bare-root plants.
- ☛ jacksonandperkins.com—Oregon. Catalog available. Probably the largest mail-order bare-root company in the U.S. Their catalogs alone will make you drool on the floor.
- ☛ hortico.com—Canadian nursery. A big operation—3,000 varieties, mostly grafted and bare-root. A good source, but I have received mislabeled varieties from them.
- ☛ weeksroses.com—Wholesale only, but you can surf their roses to find out what your local nursery might carry next spring.

There are many more nurseries. I am sure I have missed some that our members love. But enough for now! If you have visited all the sites listed here, then it is time to take the needle out of your arm. Congratulations! You are well started as a rosarian!

You have got roses in the ground that should bring you many years of enjoyment, and I have tried to kick the door open on how to let your life drift totally out of control, like Poor David's has.

The Denver Rose Society has great educational programs each month. Make sure your membership is updated (do it today!!), and let's get together and talk about our discoveries.