

A Rose Growing Calendar for Denver and The Colorado Front Range

January	Catalog/internet browsing time is planning time. Choose new rose varieties and place orders with your requested delivery dates as soon as possible. Check garden soil moisture levels 3 – 4 inches deep. Snow covered or frozen ground is fine, but if soil is workable and dry, then deep water when the daytime temperature will remain above 45 degrees for several hours. Water slowly so that it soaks 8 – 12 inches into the soil. Roses should have 4 – 8 inches of winter protection (mulch) to prevent repeated thawing and freezing. You can also use Christmas tree branches and burlap to protect the roses from drying winds.
February	If starting a new rose bed, and you did not prepare the area the previous fall, amend soil as soon as the ground is workable. Study rose literature and continue landscape planning. Consider raised beds if drainage is a problem. Roses need sun for at least half a day and can use full sun. Morning sun with afternoon shade is preferable. Do not plant roses near large trees or hedges. Remember to update rose bed maps with names of newly planted bushes. Consider having garden labels made for them. Continue to deep water roses if needed. Now is a good time to think back on what worked / didn't work in your garden and plan what you want to do different this year.
March	When soil is workable, bare root roses can be planted. Existing roses may also be transplanted with less shock now. Deep water when necessary - but don't overwater. Keep winter protection on. Roses should stay as dormant as possible, despite temperature swings. Clean rose beds, remove old leaves, trash and other debris. Take an inventory of supplies and tools. Purchase new pruners, you are worth the price of good ones. Stock up on fertilizer and any supplies you might require for pest management. Be ready for the growing season.
April	Prime bare root planting and transplanting of existing roses continues up to the middle of the month. Mound soil up around newly planted rose bushes or cover entire bush with burlap or evergreen boughs to prevent dehydration. After two weeks, wash soil away gently a little at a time to permit new growth to become acclimated. Later in the month, pruning of winter hardy shrubs may begin. Prune canes back to green stems and an outward facing bud eye. When pruning, always seal canes with cane sealer, Elmer's glue or colored finger nail polish to prevent cane borer damage. Plan to keep winter protection on less hardy bushes until mid-May. Keep beds clean. Deep water as needed.
May	Pruning time for Hybrid Teas and Floribundas is here, but don't remove mulch and prune until freeze danger is past – usually mid-May . Dispose of pruning debris and old leaves in the trash, not your compost pile. Plant new purchased nursery grown container roses (see notes in February for site selection.) As weather warms, watch for insect pests. Many can be managed with fingers and water sprays. Fertilizers can be applied to established bushes (not newly planted ones) monthly starting about the middle of the month. Water deeply before applying fertilizer.

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June	Using Integrated Pest Management (IPM), monitor for pests and diseases. Begin watering deeply at least once a week. Fertilize with a water soluble fertilizer or Mile-Hi Rose Feed for the second time. As summer heat sets in at the end of the month, apply additional mulch to an average of 2 – 3 inches deep. This will conserve water and keep the soil cooler. Keep mulch an inch or two from can base. Cut spent blooms (aka dead heading) properly to promote continued flowering. Enjoy the flowers!!
July	Once-blooming shrubs and many climbers are best pruned after flowering. Maintain your fertilization program. Continue dead heading and seal the canes. Also prune out weak inner growth to keep healthy airflow through the bush. Continue to monitor for pests and diseases. Continue deep watering (especially immediately prior to any spraying or fertilizing). Do not spray when temperatures are over 85 degrees.
August	Continue IPM monitoring. Ease back on watering in the middle of the month to begin slowing down the rose growth in preparation for the dormant season. Apply final fertilizers by the middle of the month. If vigorous basal growth appears in the last part of this month, it is wise to remove these new shoots which may not harden off before an early damaging frost. Powdery mildew may begin to reappear in the last half of the month. If it appears in spite of preventative sprays, an eradicator spray will be needed. Check with a local Consulting Rosarian.
September	Continue to reduce watering so plants can begin their hardening off process in preparation for dormancy. Mildew and blackspot may continue to appear. When removing spent blooms this month, cut just below the bloom so as not to stimulate growth which would be injured severely by freezes. Remember to remove any vigorous basal breaks starting to grow so as to prevent freeze injury to the bush.
October	The average first frost is around mid-month for much of the Front Range. Continue IPM monitoring through early freezes. Deep water prior to predicted hard freezes to lessen damage to dry roots. If growth continues, continue disease spraying. Remove any blooms just below the flower. Continue to remove basal breaks. Deadhead beneath flower heads - if at all - to help roses slow down. Keep beds clean by removing old leaves. Take time to plan and prepare new rose beds.
November	Begin to check for winter water needs by checking the soil moisture 2 – 4 inches deep. Deep water when needed, as temperatures allow. High winds and heavy snow can damage some tall, as well as young roses. Tie up or stake tall Hybrid Teams and other susceptible roses to minimize cane as well as root damage. Shorten canes only if necessary, once the plant is dormant. Tie climbers to trellis, cover with burlap if desired. Remove leaves, trash and debris from rose beds to minimize overwintering disease sports and insect pest eggs. When the ground freezes, and rose growth has clearly ceased, apply winter protection where necessary.

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December	Now that most gardening action has slowed to a virtual stop, it is time to sharpen and oil pruning tools, clean spray equipment and store it in a dry place for the winter. Continue to check soil moisture levels and water as needed when temperatures will stay above 45 degrees for several hours during the day. Roots suffer more in dry soil than in wet soil. Water slowly so that it soaks 8 – 12 inches into the soil. When the roses go dormant (after several nights below 23 degrees), apply winter protection such as mulch or pine needles to protect against drying winter winds and multiple freeze/thaw cycles. Apply loosely so water can get down to the roots.
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This calendar was adapted from our 55 page book, “**Growing Roses in Colorado**” an experienced-based guide to growing roses right here in Denver and the Colorado Front Range. Each section goes into more detail on subjects only mentioned here. Information on purchasing the book can be found on the Denver Rose Society web site www.DenverRoseSociety.org.

Remember that our volunteer **Consulting Rosarians** (CRs), are available to answer your questions. For a list of CRs in your area, go to www.DenverRoseSociety.org.

Keep your own rose calendar. Create your own special rose calendar or journal. It can function as a quick and easy reference guide for when you did what in your rose garden, provide you with an updated planning tool for future years, and supply information to guide you toward more successful rose gardening.

Want to learn more about growing roses in Denver and the Colorado Front Range? We invite you to come to our meetings which are usually held at the Denver Botanic Gardens. We love visitors and their questions at our meetings and events. For more details, please visit our website: www.DenverRoseSociety.org.