

## Selecting and Planting Roses

Fact Sheet 7.404

Garden Series | Flowers

By *A.W. Nelson and C.E. Swift\**

Revised by *Roger G. Heins & Alison Stoven O'Connor\*\**

Roses can grow in most communities in Colorado. Colorado roses exhibit some of the most vivid colors seen anywhere in the country.

The American Rose Society lists 48 classifications for roses, but roses in Colorado can generally be said to fall into one of the following types: hybrid tea, miniature, floribunda, grandiflora, climber, shrub (which includes English and Canadian roses), polyantha and hybrid rugosa.

The hybrid tea, originally a cross between a tea rose and a hybrid perpetual, is the most popular garden rose. Generally, they produce large blooms on long stems and are preferred for exhibition and cut flowers. Miniatures are naturally dwarf roses and remain popular, especially in small garden spaces. With proper care, they are a good choice for potted indoor culture. Because of their hardiness, they are excellent for outdoor use.

The first floribunda was produced from a cross between a hybrid tea and a polyantha rose. These roses usually have smaller blooms than hybrid teas, but typically repeat blooming in clusters each season. They are somewhat harder than grandifloras and hybrid teas.

The original grandiflora was produced from a cross between a hybrid tea and a floribunda. This plant is similar in size to the hybrid tea but usually has slightly smaller flowers and greater blooms.

The climbing hybrid teas and climbing grandifloras are generally not recommended for most areas of Colorado because most will bloom only on the previous year's growth. During severe winters, the previous year's growth on these climbers is damaged by cold temperatures and drying. This results in little or no bloom or blooms of poor quality the following season. There are, however, a number of repeat-blooming, large flowered climbers (LCL) that do well in Colorado's climate. Most of these climbers will bloom on the current year's growth (new wood) and have the added advantage of repeat flowers.

The term "shrub rose" is used loosely to cover roses not previously mentioned. Some of the hardiest of all roses can be found in this group. With its beauty, perfume and history, the shrub rose can be a satisfactory part of the landscape. Included in this group are the English Roses developed by David Austin. Canadian roses were developed under the direction of the Canadian Department of Agriculture for winter hardiness, disease resistance, ease of propagation and repeat blooming.

Hybrid rugosa roses are known for their fragrance, hardiness and sturdiness in the garden. They can be identified by their numerous thorns and dark green leaves with deep veining. The hips, left from spent blooms, are often showy in winter. These roses can perform in poor soils and drought conditions.



### Quick Facts

- Select a site in full sun or at a minimum 7 hours of sun with well-drained soil, free of competing tree and shrub roots.
- Select recommended plants from a reputable nursery or mail-order catalog and plant properly in good or improved soil.
- Plant bare-root and packaged roses in early spring and protect them by covering the entire plant with loose, loamy, moist soil, or a soil compost mix if the soil is clay, or use a mulch until the root system starts to function.
- Do not allow bare-root and packaged roses to dry out before and after planting.
- Plant budded roses so that the bud union is 3 to 4 inches below the soil line. Plant own root roses so that the crown is 2 inches below the soil line.
- If the soil is clay or clay loam, mix it with 1/3rd compost.

\*A.W. Nelson, former Rocky Mountain District and Region 8 director, American Rose Society, and Colorado State University Extension master gardener (deceased); and C.E. Swift, former Extension horticulture agent, Tri River Area, Grand Junction.  
\*\*Roger G. Heins, retired Vice President, Jackson and Perkins Roses; Alison Stoven O'Connor, Extension horticulture agent, Larimer County. Drawings by Lydia Cruz. 5/96. Revised 9/20.

[extension.colostate.edu](http://extension.colostate.edu)

## Selecting Plants

Roses are sold through mail-order nurseries, local garden and nursery outlets, hardware and box stores and grocery stores. Generally mail-order nurseries handle bare root, dormant roses. Local nurseries usually sell potted roses. Box stores and grocery stores may offer bare root or potted roses.

Most experienced rose growers prefer bare root, dormant plants from a reputable nursery. Potted roses are a viable choice only when the nursery has used good culture in the potting and care of the plants. Make sure bare root packaged roses are purchased before the plant has had a chance to dry out and deteriorate on the shelf.

## Site Selection

Site selection is important. The best site would be an area that gets full sun with good air circulation. In windy sites, protect the roses from the prevailing wind.

A good second choice is a location that gets full sun during the early morning hours. This might be on the east side of buildings or an area that is shaded by trees in the afternoon. Locate the plants so they receive a minimum of five to six hours of sunshine. The early sunshine will dry dew off plants and help prevent diseases.

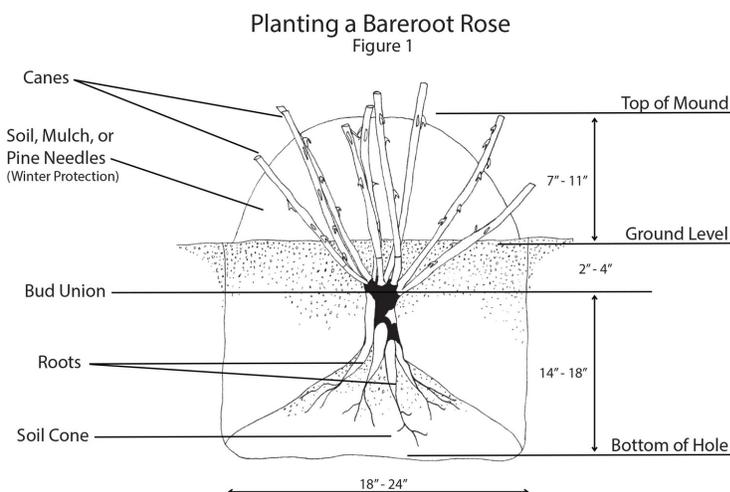
When choosing a location, avoid places where the roses have to compete with tree or shrub roots for water and nutrients. Good drainage is also a factor in site selection.

## Planting Bare Root Roses

For bare root roses, spring planting is preferred over fall. It's best to finish planting bare root roses by mid-April.

Prepare rose beds or planting holes prior to receiving the roses. If bare root and packaged plants appear dry when they are received, soak them in a bucket of water overnight. Do not leave them in water for more than 24 hours.

If planting in a previously prepared bed, dig the hole so it accommodates the root system, usually about 18-24 inches in diameter and 14-18 inches deep. If the roses are planted in soil that has not been prepared in advance, dig the hole at least that large. If the soil is compacted or needs improving, the planting hole may be as large as 36 inches in diameter and 18 inches deep (See Figure 1).



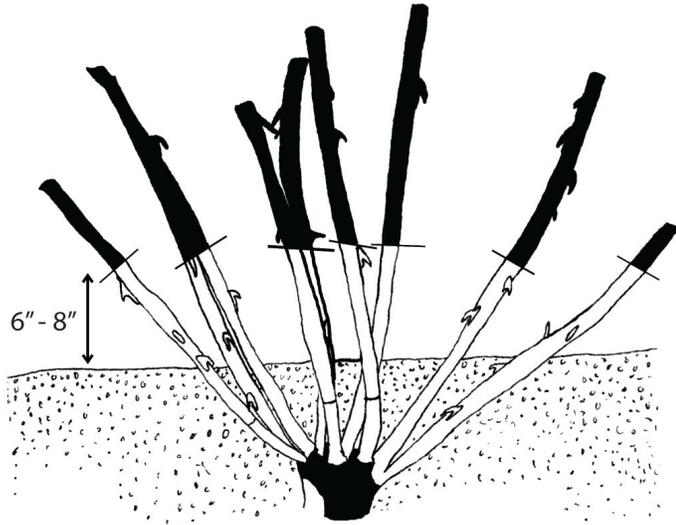
If the subsoil in the bottom of the planting hole or rose bed is heavy clay, it may be desirable to replace a portion of this subsoil with peat moss or compost. Thoroughly mix the peat moss or compost (equal in volume to no more than one-third of the kept soil) with the good soil.

Never allow the plants to dry out. Roses may be kept in a bucket of water while the hole is being prepared. When the hole is ready, prepare the plant by pruning any damaged or broken roots. Excessively long roots may be shortened, but leave 8 to 10 inches of healthy root if possible.

Support the plant by placing it on a small mound of amended soil, spreading the roots out into the planting hole. Budded roses need to be planted so that the bud union is 3 to 4 inches below ground level. Own root roses need to be planted 2 inches below ground level. Do not pack the soil around the roots. Firm with your hands or let water from the hose settle the soil. It is important to water deeply at this time, but do not puddle the soil as this tends to separate the soil components.

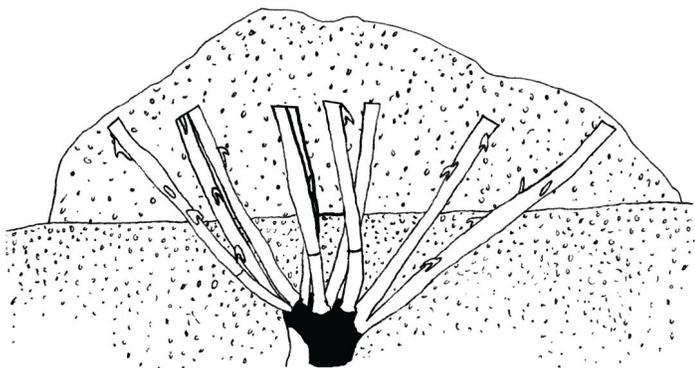
Because the plant was probably topped by machine, with no consideration for proper pruning, prune the canes. Make the pruning cuts at a 30 to 45 degree angle,  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch above a bud eye, leaving about 5 to 12 inches of

the cane. In order to keep the center of the plant open for better air circulation and light penetration, these cuts should usually be made to an outward facing bud eye (See Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Proper pruning

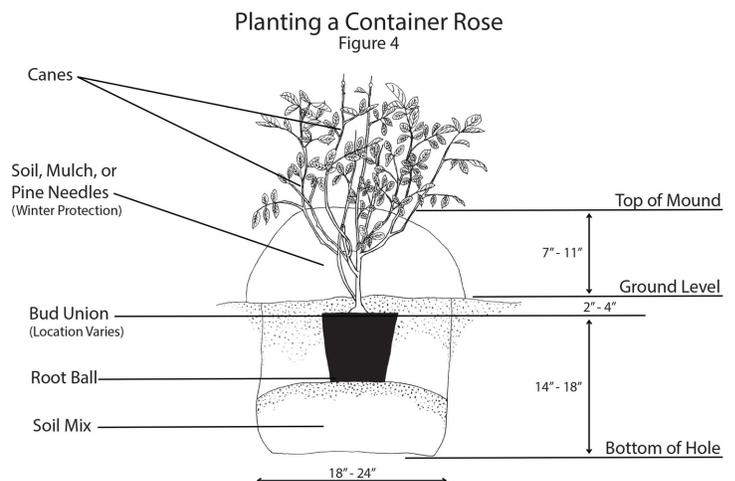
Next, cover the entire plant with loose, loamy, moist soil or a mix of compost and soil, or mulch. This will keep the canes from drying out while the root system is being established and will protect the plant from possible frost damage. Preventing the canes from drying out is the most important step to take when planting a bare root rose in Colorado because of the dry climate (low humidity) (See Figure 3). This cover may be left on from two to seven weeks, depending on the weather, the plant's progress and the time of planting. Watch the progress of the plant by exposing the tips of the canes. Be careful when removing the soil from around the canes to avoid damage to the new, tender growth. Water from a garden hose may be the best way to remove this cover.



**Figure 3:** Mound soil, pine needles, or mulch on plant

## Planting Potted Roses

Potted roses can be planted during the growing season, any time after the last killing frost. If a potted rose is purchased directly from a greenhouse, then harden off the rose outdoors (leaving the rose in its container) for 3-4 days prior to planting, watering it daily. If planting late in the season, the plant should have time to become well established in its new location before the first killing frost. Prepare the planting hole much the same as for bare root roses, with the depth determined by the height of the bud union from the bottom of the container. Carefully remove the plant from the container and place it in the hole without disturbing the root ball. Make sure the bud union is planted 2-4" below ground level. Fill in around the root ball with soil. If the rose roots are pot bound, break up the root ball with your hands or gently slice the roots with a sharp knife. Not correcting circling roots can be detrimental to your rose long-term. Water newly planted roses every day for three days; then twice a week for two weeks. Then begin deep watering once a week.



## Some Recommended Varieties

Table 1 lists popular rose varieties known to do well in Colorado.

**Table 1: Recommended roses for Colorado.**

Varieties	Color
<b>Hybrid Teas</b>	
Audrey Hepburn	Light Pink
Barbara Streisand	Mauve
Black Magic	Dark Red
Chicago Peace	Pink Blend
Chrysler Imperial	Dark Red
Crystalline	White
Dick Clark	Red Blend
Double Delight	Red Blend
Fragrant Cloud	Orange Red
Garden Party	White
Gemini	Pink Blend
Grand Dame	Rose Pink
Let Freedom Ring	Red
Marilyn Monroe	Apricot Blend
Mellow Yellow	Deep Yellow
Mister Lincoln	Dark Red
Moonstone	White
Olympiad	Medium Red
Peace	Yellow Blend
Perfect Moment	Red Blend
Pope John Paul II	White
Rio Samba	Yellow Blend
St. Patrick	Yellow Blend
Savoy Hotel	Light Pink
Secret	Pink Blend
Signature	Deep Pink

Varieties	Color
Sunset Celebration	Apricot Blend
Sunstruck	Apricot Blend
Timeless	Deep Pink
Touch of Class	Orange Pink
Tournament of Roses	Pink Blend
Veteran's Honor	Dark Red
<b>Grandifloras</b>	
Arizona	Copper
Crimson Bouquet	Dark Red
Fame!	Deep Pink
Glowing Peace	Yellow Blend
Gold Medal	Medium Yellow
Lagerfield	Mauve
Queen Elizabeth	Medium Pink
Strike it Rich	Deep Golden
<b>Floribundas</b>	
Amber Queen	Apricot Blend
Apricot Nectar	Apricot Blend
Betty Boop	Red Blend
Bill Warriner	Orange Pink
Black Cherry	Deep Red
Chihuly	Red Blend
Cinco de Mayo	Russet
Class Act	White
Drop Dead Red	Red Velvet
Easy Going	Yellow Blend
Easy Does It	Orange Pink Apricot Blend
Edd Tide	Mauve

Varieties	Color
Europeana	Dark Red
Gruss an Aachen	Light Pink
Hot Cocoa	Russett
Ice Berg	White
Julia Child	Yellow Gold
Jump for Joy	Peachy Pink
Lavaglut	Dark Red
Livin' Easy	Orange Blend
Mardi Gras	Pink Blend
Nearly Wild	Medium Pink
Playboy	Red Blend
Playgirl	Medium Pink
Purple Tiger	Purple White Stripes
Rainbow Sorbet	Multi; Red Yellow Pink White
Sally Holmes	White
Sentimental	Red Blend
Sexy Remy	Medium Pink
Singin' in the Rain	Apricot Blend
Sunsprite	Deep Yellow
<b>Miniatures</b>	
Bee's Knees	Yellow to White; Pink Edges
Baby Grand	Medium Pink
Child's Play	Pink Blend
Fairhope	Light Yellow
Giggles	Medium Pink
Gourmet Popcorn	White
Hot Tamale	Yellow Blend
Incognito	Mauve

Varieties	Color
Irresistible	White
Jean Kenneally	Apricot Blend
Kristen	Red Blend
Miss Flippins	Medium Red
Perrine	Orange Pink
Rainbow's End	Yellow Blend
Ruby Baby	Red Blend
Ruby Ruby	Medium Red
Salute	Red
Sunsprite	Deep Yellow
<b>Climbing Miniatures</b>	
Candy Cane	Pink Blend
Hi Ho	Orange Pink
Little Girl	Orange Pink
Jeannie LaJoie	Medium Pink
Pink Cascade	Medium Pink
Rainbow's End	Yellow Blend
Ruby Penchant	Mauve
<b>Climbers</b>	
America	Orange Pink
Above and Beyond	Orange Apricot
Don Juan	Red
Dynamite	Dark Red
Fourth of July	Red Blend
Golden Showers	Medium Yellow
Handel	Red Blend
John Cabot	Medium Pink
John Davis	Medium Red

Varieties	Color
Lady in Red	Red
New Dawn	Light Pink
Polka	Apricot Blend
Ramblin Red	Red
White Dawn	White
Zephrine Droughin	Deep Pink
<b>Shrub (*Denotes polyantha rose)</b>	
Alba Meidiland	White
Apricot	Drift Apricot
Ballerina	Medium Pink
Bonica	Medium Pink
Carefree Delight	Pink Blend
Carefree Wonder	Pink Blend
Dortmund	Medium Red
Double Knock Out	Red
Flower Girl	Light Pink
Kaleidoscope	Mauve
Kashmir	Red
Knock Out	Red Blend
Lady Shalott	Orange Red
Margo Koster*	Orange Blend
Pink Meidiland	Pink Blend
Princess Alexandra of Kent	Deep Pink
Princess Ann	Deep Pink to Red
Sally Holmes	White
Starry Night	White
Sunrise Sunset	Pink Blend
Super Hero	Red
The Fairy*	Light Pink

Varieties	Color
<b>English (David Austin primarily)</b>	
Abraham Darby	Orange Pink
Ambridge Rose	Apricot Blend
Evelyn	Apricot Blend
Gertrude Jekyll	Medium Pink
Golden Celebration	Deep Yellow
Graham Thomas	Deep Yellow
Heritage	Light Pink
Mary Rose	Medium Pink
Othello	Medium Red
Pat Austin	Orange Blend
Sharifa Asma	Light Pink
The Pilgrim	Medium Yellow
Tradescant	Dark Red
<b>Canadian Hardy</b>	
Adelaide Hoodless	Deep Pink
Bill Reid	Apricot Blend
Champlain	Dark Red
Cuthbert Grant	Dark Red
Henry Hudson	White
Henry Kelsay	Medium Red
John Cabot	Medium Red
Morden Blush	Medium Pink
Morden Centennial	Medium Pink
Morden Sunrise	Yellow Blend
William Baffin	Deep Pink
Winnipeg Parks	Deep Pink

Varieties	Color
<b>Hybrid Rugosa</b>	
Hansa Medium	Red
Linda Campbell	Medium Red
Therese Bugnet	Medium Pink
<b>Buck Roses</b>	
Carefree Beauty	Medium Pink
Earth Song	Deep Pink
Mountain Music	Pink Blend
Prairie Sunrise	Apricot Blend
Quietness	Light Pink
Winter Sunset	Apricot

*Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating. CSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. No endorsement of products mentioned is intended nor is criticism implied of products not mentioned.*