

Growing Roses in Marin – Calendar of Rose Care

January

Prune established roses, clean up all cuttings, leaf litter and remove from the garden. If desired, apply a dormant spray before new growth begins; be sure to spray soil around plants.

February

Finish pruning and plant new roses. Keep them moist by piling mulch around the plant, especially bare-root roses that have no established roots. Water if winter rains have been light.

March

Remove weeds (necessary all year long) around plants - they are competing for moisture and nutrients in the soil. After the rains subside, apply 2 - 3 inches of mulch to conserve water and reduce weeds. Keep mulch 2 – 3 inches away from the base of the plant to promote air circulation. Water plants if Nature hasn't. If you have an automated irrigation system, check its operation and make needed repairs before plants get too large.

April

If you fertilize roses, begin after the first flush of bloom in spring, then monthly through September. Moderate use of high-nitrogen products; these stimulate lush new growth that is an attractant to aphids. Increase watering as weather warms and do it early in the day so that foliage has a chance to dry. Deadhead roses soon after blooms are finished to stimulate new growth. Continue finger pruning and removal of blind shoots. Watch out for aphids and spittlebugs - they can be removed with a blast of water.

May

Increase watering as daytime temperatures warm up. Remove any diseased blooms, leaves, canes or stems if they appear and discard in the garbage (don't add to the compost bin). Watch for rose slugs (they can strip the top surface of leaf off in a day) and remove. Check that tree roses or climbing roses are securely staked before summer winds begin.

June

Prune old garden roses after they complete their annual blooming cycle. Maintain watering, weeding, deadheading, fertilizing and your general clean-up program. Watch for suckers from below grafted bud unions and destroy at their roots. Visit local rose gardens to get ideas on other varieties and their performance.

July

Same as June; sanitation is of prime importance. Keep fallen leaves picked up to reduce spread of diseases. Watch for spider mites - they reproduce quickly in hot, dry weather and prefer dusty conditions. Foliage can take on a bronze appearance; look for webbing on the undersides of the leaves. Repeated sprays of water, particularly on the undersides of leaves, can help keep them under control. Share the bounty of blooms with friends and family!

August

Ditto for July. Strong basal shoots (new canes emanating from the base of the plant) continue to develop. Keep them pinched back to 12 - 14 inches above ground. Yellow leaves may begin to develop as foliage ages; it's not a problem if they are the older leaves towards the base of the plant. If they near the top, it may be chlorosis. Test soil pH and iron level to confirm and adjust accordingly. Collect petals for potpourri.

September

Keep up with watering; this can be the hottest and driest weather of the season. This is the last month for regular rose fertilizer. Now is a good time to begin development of new rose beds before heavy rains set in.

October

Slow down on watering as temperatures cool off. Take some cuttings from growing tips of roses for propagating new roses.

November

Let plants go dormant. Don't trim off spent blooms; let hips develop. Watch soil moisture; if rains are light, continue to water. Review the performance of your plants and remove any that haven't met your expectations. Place your orders for new bareroot plants by the end of the year.

December

Begin pruning toward the end of the month. Bareroot plants should be available at nurseries for planting. It is also a good time (along with pruning) to do any relocation of plants within your garden.

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