

Growing Roses in Containers **By Jim Wagner**

Growing roses in containers is relatively easy but there are few modifications, including those shown below.

Container is large enough so that the bud union is well below the top of the soil in the pot and there will be sufficient room for future root growth. Suggest a minimum of at least a 5 gallon black plastic nursery pot (14" wide x 12" deep) for Hybrid Tea, Grandiflora, or Floribunda type roses and a larger size for Shrub types such as the David Austin Shrub and Knockout series of roses. For placement on one's deck where aesthetics may be a concern, possibly a larger size container such as the plastic pots that are the color of clay pots would be more appealing.

Use a "soilless" mix such as Pro-Mix B, a peat based growing medium with vermiculate and perlite included – retail cost for a 3.8 cubic foot bag should be in the mid-20s dollar range. This or a similar product should be available in hardware and other stores and nurseries selling roses in 3 or 4 gallon nursery pots. Advantages of a soilless mix include limited soil compaction, reasonable moisture retention, and lighter weight when moving containers around.

Having a minimum of at least six hours of sunlight, preferably early morning to mid-afternoon.

Adjusting the frequency of watering to at least twice a week instead of the customary one inch per week for roses planted in the ground. More often when the temperatures get into the 80s and 90s.

Assuming that the roses this person would like will be available in 3 or 4 gallon pots and will be in bloom by mid-May, after re-potting into larger containers, fertilizing and disease control would be similar to in ground plantings. For me I like to apply 10-10-10 granular fertilizer in early May, mid-June, and late July with an application of a water soluble 20-20-20 fertilizer in between the applications of the granular fertilizers. Always thoroughly soak the soil several hours to a day before fertilizing and after if you do not have a good soaking rain before and after fertilizing.

Having a garage, barn, or shed where the container grown roses can be stored for the winter, preferable after a number of heavy frosts (early-to-mid-November). Water well before placing them in storage and check a couple of times during the winter and add water if they appear to be dry. Place a tarp or something similar over and around the pots. If the storage area is cement floor, place 2'x4's underneath to keep the containers off the cold floor.

Now to look at some varieties of roses that falls in the colors preferred by this elderly lady. Yellows – Eureka (F), Elina (HT), Graham Thomas (S), Gold Medal (Gr), Sunsprite (F), and Julia Child (F); Pinks – Sexy Remy (F), Gemini (HT), and Carefree Beauty (S); Orchid (Mauve) – Angel Face (F), Escapade (F), Burgundy Iceberg (F) and Heirloom (HT). If more fragrance is desired, Fragrant Cloud (HT) or Olympiad (HT), with the latter having a longer lasting bloom.

If the emphasis is on low maintenance roses, Shrubs (those with an “S”) require less care than the others shown above. But if the ultimate in low care is desired, then try some of the “Knockout” type roses that come in various colors including Pink and Red, either single or double, Sunny (yellow), Blushing (light pink), Rainbow Knockout (coral pink). I grow the pink, red, and sunny varieties that produce masses of color all season long. I would imagine that the other Knockout varieties would also produce a good showing of blooms.

File: Growing Roses in Containers, etc. 2014