

Rose Care
Springtime Do's and Don'ts
By Jim Wagner

Planting of Bare Root Roses – Usually around the latter part of April in Central New York:

DO's:

1. Keep the plants moist until they can be planted. If you will be planting within a couple of days of receipt, moisten the sphagnum moss or other packaging material within the plastic bag and place in a cool place but not where they will freeze. If you cannot plant them for several days, place them in a bucket of water and store in a cool place.
1. Dig a planting hole large enough to hold rose roots without crowding or bending them. At least 18 to 20 inches deep and wide. Deeper and wider for plants with large root systems. If you have two or more to plant side by side, digging of a trench is faster and more efficient.
1. Add soil amendments A handful each of bone meal and alfalfa pellets and a scoop of Pro-Mix in the bottom of the hole. Mix well and form a soil mound for the roots to be spread over.
1. Trim tips of the roots; remove the part of any root that is damaged, and place in a bucket of water before planting. Trimming of the roots encourages better root development.
1. Set plant over the soil mound so that so that the bud union (the round knob between the roots and canes) is at least two inches and preferably three to four inches below ground level.
1. Fill in soil around bush. First, half fill with soil and gently pack. Add water and fill rest of hole with soil after the water has soaked in. Water again when planting completed.
2. Mound 8 to 10 inches of soil around the canes. Keep this mound moist until new growth begins. Then carefully and gradually remove this soil over a two to three week period. This will help retain moisture while the roots are getting established.

DON'TS:

1. DO NOT add fertilizer to newly planted roses for at least a month after they have been planted.

Removal of Winter Protection:

DON'TS:

1. DO NOT be in a rush to remove winter protection. There are likely to be heavy frosts well into late April and possibly later that could cause damage to canes that have survived under the winter protection.

DO'S:

1. Do wait until at least the Forsythia is in full bloom. Then gradually remove winter protection

over a two to three week period, being prepared to add winter protection back if a heavy frost or freeze is in the forecast.

Care of Miniature and/or Miniflora roses received in small pots from nurseries in early spring:

DON'TS:

1. DO NOT plant them directly into your garden. They need to become acclimated to being outside.

DO'S:

1. Do transplant them into a six inch or larger pot filled with a moistened soilless mix such as Pro-Mix.
2. Set them outside in a protected area. But bring inside if there is a chance of a frost.
3. After the chance of frost has past, recess the entire pot into the soil in your garden for at least its first season. Provide usual care, especially adequate watering

Planting of Potted Roses – Usually available around Mother's Day and after in nine inch or larger pots:

DO's:

1. Same as Items 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 under Bare Root roses. If soil in the pots is compacted or the roots are root bound, slightly loosen the soil and separate bound roots before placing the bush in the ground.

DON'TS:

1. DO NOT add fertilizer to newly planted roses for at least a month after they have been planted.
1. RESIST a temptation to purchase potted roses in smaller containers that appear in some stores earlier in the season as they are not likely to have as good a root system as those potted in larger containers.
1. DO NOT mound soil around potted plants as they are already leafed out.

Fertilizing and Spraying

DO's:

1. Hold off fertilizing until there are firm signs of new growth, usually early to mid-May, Soil is then likely to be warm enough to take up the nutrients. If done too early, part of the nutrients will just leach away.

1. Start a systematic spraying program with at least a fungicide as soon as there is new growth showing. Repeat as provided in the directions, generally every seven to 10 days.
2. Water deeply before fertilizing and/or spraying if you have not had a soaking rain recently,