



Fact Sheet



Roses: History, Cultural & Propagation

Brief History:

Fossils of roses dating back 32 million years have been found in rocks in Colorado. Evidence has been found of roses indigenous to every part of the Northern hemisphere, they are not indigenous to any part of the Southern hemisphere.

Roses are believed to have been first cultivated in China about 5000 years ago. There is also evidence that they were cultivated by the Greeks around 600B.C. Around the end of the 17th Century it was discovered how plants may be hybridized to form new species, however another 100 years went by before this knowledge was utilised, eventually leading to the 20th Century's plethora of newly bred hybrids. There are nearly 200 wild species, 12 of which were listed in 1753 in the 'Species Planatarium' the first definitive plant identification book by Carl Linnaeus, of these only a few have been used in hybridization from which most of the roses we grow today are developed. For those wishing to discover more of the enchanting tale of rose history further reading can be had with 'The Quest For The Rose' by Phillips and Rix.

Cultural Requirements:

Roses are undoubtedly the single most popular garden plants sold by nurseries. They can be used to create either a formal effect or simply allowed to enhance a cottage garden or even just to brighten a drab area in your garden. Most of our rose buyers/growers agree that they are an addictive habit hence a little time should be taken to provide the optimum growing conditions for them.

Plant your rose with the bud union approximately 5cm above soil level, water in well. Roses prefer an open, sunny position in soil that is well drained and has added organic matter. A pH of around 6.5 is recommended. They will suffer in wet, poorly drained soils and most will struggle in shade. Competition from tree roots or grass will also have a deleterious effect.

Too much shade tends to encourage mildew and black spot problems, as will a lack of air circulation around the plants. Good cultural practice such as removing any prunings and fallen leaves will minimize these problems.

In the nursery environment we spray our plants every 2-3 weeks with a Triforine based spray to prevent fungal problems from becoming a major problem. For those that prefer a more organic method, a spray made from 1 part milk & 6 parts water will assist in preventing powdery mildew if sprayed fortnightly.

Aphids, the main pest of roses (tiny sap sucking insects that tend to attack new growth) can be controlled by using a pyrethrum based spray, a natural insecticide, care should be taken as pyrethrum is also toxic to bees and goldfish. Rogor, a more toxic spray will provide a longer term protection from aphids.

Fertilise with composted animal manure, compost or rose food (we recommend Gro Plus Rose Food) 2-3 times per year or every 2-3 weeks with a liquid feed during the growing season.

They will benefit from mulching with straw, composted bark, mushroom compost or pine bark though care should be taken to keep the area around the trunk clear. They will tolerate periods of dryness and are best watered by 2-3 weekly soakings during summer rather than light daily applications, an hour long soaking is preferable.

Prune lightly after the spring flush, around December, to encourage autumn flowering, with a heavier prune in mid winter. During growing season remove spent blooms by cutting back to the next outward bud or shoot with 5 leaves.



Propagation:

Roses can be propagated in a variety of ways, either by seed, layering (rare), cuttings (popular with miniature roses), hybridization (for new varieties), grafting (rare in Australia), division (uncommon but can be used for miniature roses that become excessively woody after three or so years) or tissue culture.

The most common method used by professional growers is to bud the roses onto specially grown rootstock. This is undertaken in mid summer when the sap is flowing freely in the rootstocks.

Therefore roses can be propagated in a number of ways to either perpetuate the species or to develop a new cultivar.

At Stoneman's we are delighted to assist rose buyers in all aspects of rose purchases, through to information on growing and selecting the right variety for you.

ROSE FACTS:

Rose vinegar, used on the Continent to combat headache caused by hot sun, is prepared by steeping dried rose petals in distilled vinegar which is not boiled. Cloths are soaked in the liquid and then applied to the head.

Ointment of roses (commonly known as Cold Cream) is much used against heat and inflammation of the head, to anoint the forehead and temples and to cool and heal red pimples. To prepare, the British Pharmacopoeia directs that "11/2oz each of spermaceti and white wax be melted with 9oz of Almond Oil then mixed with 7oz of rose water + 8 minims of Oil of Rose".



Roses make wonderful pot-pourris, nearly every scented flower and leaf can be used as an ingredient, once dried they can be added to other ingredients such as sweet geranium, lemon verbena, cloves, mace, and cinnamon.

Medieval herbalists considered the Red Rose to be more binding than any other species, being "good against all kinds of fluxes, prevents vomiting, stops tickling coughs and is of service in consumption"