



ROSES

Types, Selection and Environmental Requirements for Idaho Gardens

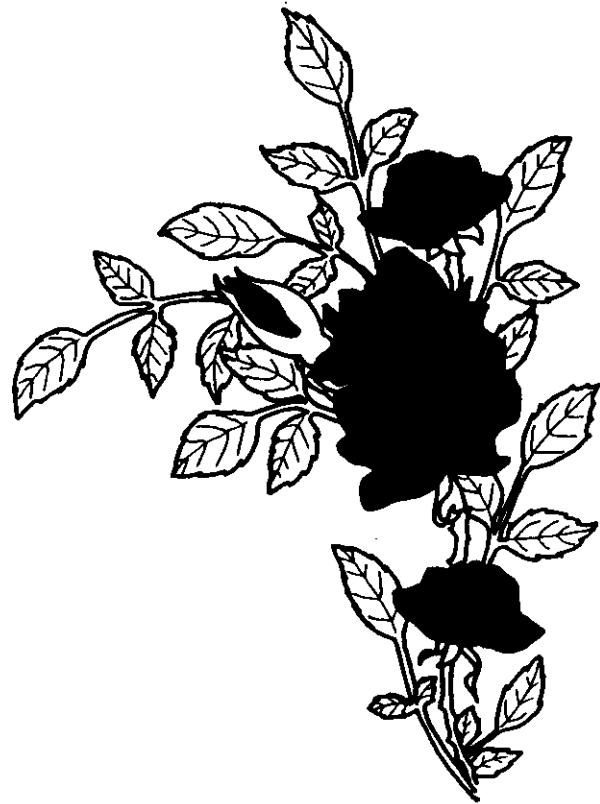
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The rose, recently named the national flower of the United States, is a favorite garden flower that can be grown successfully in many areas of Idaho. The beauty and delicate fragrance of roses have universal appeal. Roses are useful for cut flowers and many landscape effects. However, anyone who wants to grow roses must be committed to caring for the plants since they require more attention than most garden flowers. If you cannot spend an hour or so a week with these plants during the growing season, you should choose other types of flowering plants. This publication discusses some factors that home gardeners should consider before starting to grow roses.

History

The rose has captured the imagination of mankind throughout the ages. Poets, painters, songwriters and gardeners have chronicled its place in the history of man. Roses have been cultivated for more than 5,000 years and have undergone many changes from the original wild types. The Romans used roses extensively in their rituals and encouraged the growing of these plants. Roses and fruit trees were the first crops grown by nurserymen. Popularity of the rose seems to be increasing today. At least 50 million families throughout the U.S. own one or more rose bushes.

Roses differ in growth habits from tiny miniatures to vigorous climbers. Flower colors are available in virtually the full range of the rainbow. An estimated 20,000 different rose varieties have been named and grown. Rose breeders have created new, attractive flower forms, better disease resistance and thornless plants that are more easily grown by today's busy gardener.



Types of Rose

All modern roses are the result of many years of hybridizing and selecting for desirable characteristics. Most use wild roses as their rootstock. Many of today's roses have such a diverse background and parentage that it is impossible to assign them to a specific botanical species as is done with other plants. Because of this di-

verse parentage and the tremendous number of cultivars¹ available, rose specialists have defined some general categories, or classes, for popular roses. New roses are assigned to these classes according to their habit of growth and the type of flower they produce.

All roses are separated into two broad categories based on growth habits: bush roses and climbing roses. Bush roses grow from 1 to 8 feet tall and need no support. Climbing roses, on the other hand, produce extremely long, limber canes that must be supported.

Bush Roses

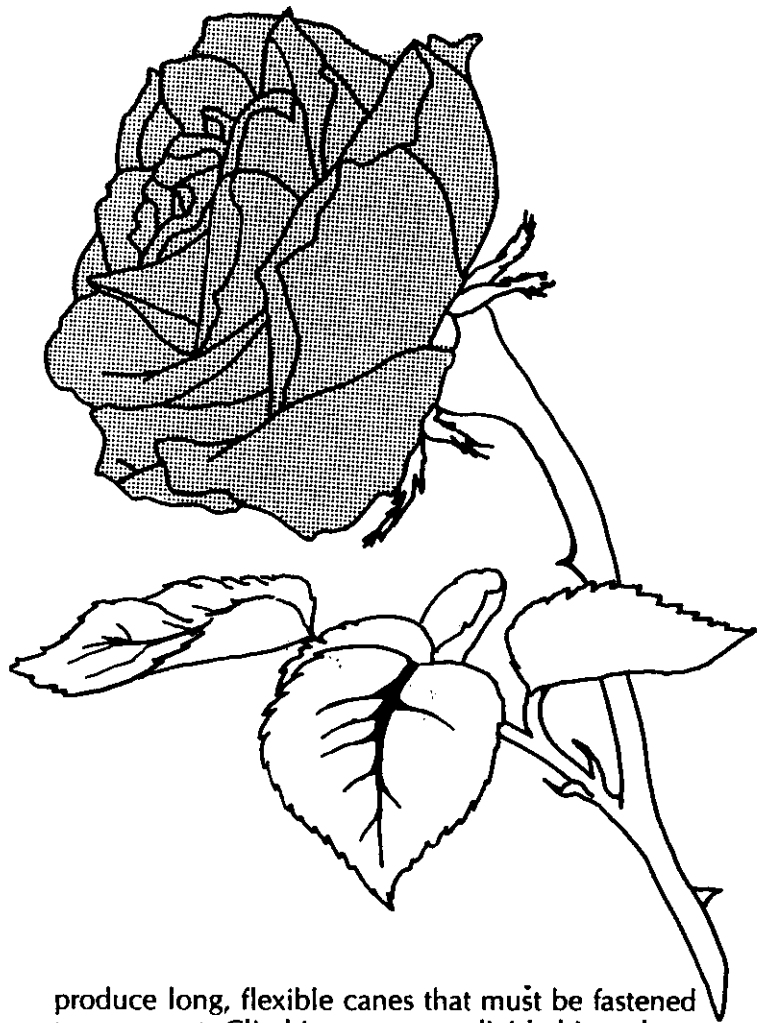
B *Hybrid Tea Roses* — Hybrid tea roses are by far the most popular roses in American gardens. The first cultivar classified in this group was released in 1867. The group name comes from the fact that one of the parents was the Chinese Teascented Rose. These roses are large; upright bush types that produce large flowers in a wide range of colors — red, pink, white, yellow, blue, mauve and tan. Flowers are produced continuously during summer and fall until frost. Hybrid tea roses have long pointed buds with good flower form, and some have blooms that are extremely fragrant. They tend to produce one terminal blossom per stem. This makes them useful for cut flowers and floral displays. Most roses that are grown by commercial greenhouses for cut flowers are hybrid tea varieties. These roses are also called “everblooming” or the “monthly bloomers.”

Floribunda Roses — Floribundas are bush roses with a lower growth habit than the hybrid tea roses, but both have the same range of flower colors. The major differences between the two are that the floribunda has smaller blooms and produces more flowers per stem. Floribunda blossoms do not have the high, pointed center of the hybrid tea. These roses were developed as garden display plants and are seldom used as cut flowers.

Grandiflora Roses — Grandiflora is a recent addition to the types of roses available. They are a result of crossing hybrid tea and floribunda roses. The plants are vigorous, produce large flowers and usually have more blooms per stem than hybrid teas, but fewer than floribundas. The flower color range of grandifloras and their plant form are the same as the hybrid tea type. In fact, you may have difficulty telling the difference between many of the grandifloras and the hybrid tea roses.

Climbing Roses

C Climbing roses are the largest, most vigorous roses used in the garden. These roses originated from crossing species (wild) roses with other cultivars. They are not truly climbing plants but



produce long, flexible canes that must be fastened to a support. Climbing roses are divided into three groups based on their vigor and the type of blooms they produce. These groups are ramblers, everblooming climbers and trailing roses.

Ramblers — Ramblers are the most vigorous and produce small blooms in dense clusters. They bloom only once a year, and this drawback limits their popularity.

Everblooming Climbers — Everblooming climbers are not as vigorous as ramblers, though they tend to produce several flushes of bloom. They usually have larger flowers than ramblers.

Trailing Roses — Trailing roses are less vigorous than either ramblers or everblooming climbers. They grow flat on the ground, making them useful as groundcover plants on banks or other sunny locations. Trailing roses bloom once a year and produce flowers in clusters similar to the ramblers.

Unusual Roses

U *Miniature Roses* — Rose plants must be 18 inches or less in height and have small stems, leaves and blossoms to qualify as miniatures. Most miniatures bloom continuously from spring to frost. They are available in all colors and are winter hardy. The miniatures are used in the landscape as border plants and are also adaptable for growing in

¹Cultivar is the botanical term for a hybrid rose created by a breeder, but the word “variety” is commonly used instead.

pots for indoor display. Most miniatures are very hardy in Idaho because they are grown on their own root.

Polyantha Roses — Polyanthas are an old type of rose that has lost popularity and is rarely used today. These roses are similar to the floribunda type, but the plants are not as vigorous and flower clusters are smaller.

"Old", Shrub and Species Roses — Among the many other types are old roses such as Hybrid Perpetuals, Hybrid Mury Galica, Centiofolia, Alba, Kugosa, Moss and Damask. Some of these varieties may have a place in rose plantings, but generally they are difficult to locate.² They are not preferred as cutting roses. Thus, demand for these types-of roses is small.

Roses in the Landscape

Roses have been a part of the home landscape for as long as they have been cultivated by man. They can be used as specimen plants, screens, hedges, foundation plants, mass plantings in beds, border plantings, edging plants and ground covers. Since roses are deciduous and have bare branches during the winter months, they should be used only sparingly in a foundation planting.

Roses are effective as accent plants. If they are used as accent plants in the foundation planting, a background of evergreens such as holly should be planted to provide contrast for the colorful rose blooms. Floribundas are probably the best type for this use because of their compact habit and their masses of smaller flowers.

Climbing roses may be used as accent plants on trellises or on garden walls. Due to their aggressive growth habit, they will require training to stay within bounds. Miniature roses can be used as edging plants for beds near the walk.

The best use for hybrid tea roses and grandifloras is in a bed in the private section of the landscape. Locate beds near the patio so their fragrance can be enjoyed or in a location where they can be seen from inside the home. Do not scatter single plants around the yard. Using beds, especially for tea roses, makes maintenance easier. Hybrid teas, grandifloras and floribundas should be planted 2 to 3 feet apart. Climbers should be planted 6 to 8 feet apart; miniatures, 12 to 18 inches apart.

Essential Growing Conditions

Roses require regular care and attention because of their unique hybrid background. The ancestors of today's cultivars were warm climate-

loving, tender plants. Modern roses still are sensitive to stress and should be grown under conditions that will keep them as healthy as possible. Healthy rose plants are more pest resistant and require less care or maintenance than plants that are stressed.

Light — An open, sunny planting site protected from strong winds is desirable. Rose plants should have at least a half day of sun, preferably in the morning. This exposure will dry dew or water collected on the plants and thereby reduce mildew. Afternoon sun in midsummer fades and burns petals on some varieties. When planting roses near a fence or wall, leave enough room to work around the plant. Rose trellises should not be closer than 18 to 24 inches to walls. Limited air movement resulting from crowded rose plants enhances diseases.

Competition — The roots of most roses don't compete well with those of trees, shrubs or lawns planted close by. Roses seldom prosper in the vicinity of fibrous-rooted trees and shrubs such as birch, elm, maple, willow or privet. If you are planting roses near trees, install an underground barrier of concrete curbing, sheet metal or heavy roofing paper to prevent root competition. The barrier should be 16 to 20 inches deep.

Soil — Roses tolerate many soil types. However, they grow best in a relatively fertile soil that is high in organic matter and is slightly acid, about pH 6.0. Heavy clay subsoils or sandy soils with low fertility must be improved if roses are to be grown successfully in them.

Like most ornamental plants, roses prefer well-drained locations and cannot tolerate soggy soil. If the soil is poorly drained, construct a 12-inch raised bed to improve drainage.

Selection Criteria for Rose Cultivars

Hardiness is the first factor to consider when selecting a rose cultivar. Since Idaho has four cold hardiness zones (USDA Zones 3, 4, 5 and 6), you should select a rose plant based on the zone rating for your area. Ask your nursery operator or Extension county agent if you are unsure of your area's hardiness rating.

Although many cultivars of hybrid tea, floribunda, grandiflora and climbing roses can grow in any one of Idaho's hardiness zones, the plants may need winter protection. Procedures for protecting roses from winter weather are described in CIS 796, "Roses: Care After Planting."

Pest resistance of roses should also be considered before purchasing a cultivar. Pests that attack roses are common in Idaho. Diseases include black spot, powdery mildew, brown canker, rose rust and crown gall. Problem insects found in the state include aphids, leafhoppers, leafrollers, pith borers, slugs, spider mites, thrips and rose weevils. Before selecting

²Some rose companies specialize in old roses. One company with a good selection is "Roses of Yesterday and Today," located on Browns Valley Road, Watsonville, California 95076. Another company is Historical Roses, 1657 West Jackson St., Painsville, Ohio 44077.

a particular rose, compare it with other available cultivars for amount of resistance or susceptibility to any of these pests.

Suggested Varieties

The tremendous number of types and cultivars of roses on the market makes it difficult to choose one rose that will do well in all locations. Your local Rose Society is a good source of information about roses that do well in your area.

An excellent criterion for selecting garden roses is to choose those that have won the coveted "All-America Award." The All-America Rose Selections (AARS) group was founded in 1938 as a non-profit organization to test new rose introductions and identify the best roses with the AARS award. These new roses are tested for 2 years in 23 testing gardens located throughout the United States. Only the most vigorous and trouble-free roses receive the award. Usually, AARS winners are roses that do well in most locations. About 40 percent of all roses sold in the U.S. are those that have been rated as AARS winners. Since 1940, 150 cultivars have been so designated. More information may be obtained by writing All-America Rose Selections, Box 218, Shenandoah, Iowa 51601.

Many other roses that have never won an award have also done well in thousands of home gardens. These roses, as well as the All-America winners, are listed and rated in the Handbook For Selecting Roses, published annually by the American Rose Society, P. O. Box 30,000, Shreveport, Louisiana 71130. It is available for a nominal cost.

Idaho Rose Gardens

Boise: Municipal Rose Garden, Julia Davis Park, 512 S. 4th. May to November. 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. 2,600 plants

Caldwell: Caldwell Municipal Rose Garden. March to October. 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. 5,300 roses

Lewiston: Rose Garden, Intersection US 12 and Spiral Highway. 800 plants

Nampa: Lakeview Park Rose Garden, Lakeview Park. 1,000 plants

Pocatello: Rotary Rose Garden, adjacent to Lilac Park. May to October. 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. 1,500 plants

Additional Recommended Reading

Two other new University of Idaho publications discuss other phases of raising roses in Idaho gardens. Also available at Extension County Offices throughout the state, they are:

CIS 795 — Roses: Buying and Planting. 35¢/copy

CIS 796 — Roses: Care After Planting. 35¢/copy

Among the other good references available are these comprehensive books:

Crockett, James Underwood. 1975. *Roses*. Time-Life Book Series, Time-Life Books. New York.

Edinger, Philip (ed.). 1982. *How to Grow Roses*. Sunset Books. Lane Publishing Co., Menlo Park, Calif.

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Trade Names

To simplify information, trade names have been used. Neither endorsement of named products is intended nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.