

# Bonnie's Guide to Growing and Caring for Roses

**T**his care sheet is specific to the Bay Area. Most rose care instructions you see are written for colder climates, but it is not necessary to protect roses from freezing here. There are, however, some climatic variations within our own area to consider. West of the hills and anywhere along the water, temperatures will be very mild and humid, which means you should select roses that are fairly mildew resistant and that the petal count needs to be on the low side (20-30) so that the flowers will open. Roses grown in the hotter inland areas can have a higher petal count (30 and above) and the disease resistance factor can be less of a concern. Climatic variations aside, here are some general guidelines for growing roses:

1. **SUN** - Lots of it, 4-5 hours minimum. Just remember, afternoon sun is hotter than morning sun and Danville sun is hotter than Oakland sun. Roses won't need as many hours where the sun is hotter.

2. **WATER** - All roses need regular watering. Regular watering is deep, thorough and applied on a regular basis. How often depends on sun, wind and most especially the type of soil you have. Therefore it is necessary to water more often in Alameda's sandy soil than in Walnut Creek's adobe. Roses on a windy hill will need more frequent water than roses in a sheltered site.

3. **FERTILIZER** - All roses perform better with a regular fertilization program. Having strongly stated that, I am now going to hedge on what to fertilize with. Everyone has their own personal formula. For the advanced grower, I have included the recipe of a well-respected rosarian. Try it and let me know what you think. I welcome all feedback. Basically any balanced fertilizer with the middle # being the highest, such as **Master Nursery™ Rose Food** is fine as long as it is applied regularly, as directed on the package.

4. **MULCH** - All roses love an organic mulch applied around their roots. **Fir Bark Mulch, Paydirt, Chicken Manure or Bumper Crop** are all good to use as a mulch. Mulching

does several things. It acts as an insulator keeping the soil cool and the moisture in. It acts as a weed control and the few weeds that do manage to grow through are easier to pull out. Most importantly, it improves the soil over time. Mulch should be spread around the plant about 2" deep, being sure to keep the main stem free of mulch and exposed to the air. To encourage early bloom, delay mulching until after the soil has been warmed by spring temperatures.

5. **PESTS** - All roses get pests—sad, but true. However, there are lots of solutions to choose from to control these pests and leave you with beautiful flowers.

If you choose not to use chemicals to control pests, there are cultural practices and non-chemical means available. However, if you want perfect show/exhibition roses, then protecting them with horticultural chemicals may be your best choice.

#### A NOTE ON PLANTING ROSES PURCHASED FROM ORCHARD

When you purchase a rose at Orchard Nursery it will be in a paper pot. This enables you to plant your rose at any time. To plant your rose, dig a hole twice as wide as the pot and half again as deep. Amend the soil you have dug out by adding **Fir Bark Mulch, Paydirt, Chicken Manure or Bumper Crop** to make a 50/50 mixture. Make four slits in the sides of the paper pot. Add **Osmocote** slow release fertilizer, and enough of the soil mix back into the hole so that the soil level of the rose is even with your garden soil when the paper pot is placed in the hole. Tuck remaining soil mixture around the sides of the pot, tamping it tightly in place. The lip of the paper pot will be protruding above the soil, this may be left to form a watering basin for the first year or it can be cut off. Mulch, as directed in #4 above, and water your newly planted rose thoroughly.

PEST	CHEMICAL CONTROL	ALTERNATIVE
Aphids	MasterNursery 'PestFighter' Rose & Flower Insect Spray	rub off, hose off
Beetles	"	hand pick
Caterpillars	"	hand pick or B.T.
Mites	Ortho Systemic Insect Killer (formerly known as Isotox)	hose off often
Thrips	"	Pyrethrin, Neem oil or Hort. oil

# Rose Feeding & Spraying



## The Fertilizer Program

*Applied only twice a year!*

In February and again in August. The amount given is for 1 rose. You can proportionately mix a larger amount of the ingredients in a wheelbarrow and apply at a rate of 1 ½ cups per rose.

16-16-16 -----	½ cup
Bone Meal -----	½ cup
FST, Iron Plus** or Iron Sulfate* -----	½ cup
Magnesium Sulfate (Epsom Salts) ---	2 Tablespoons

Sprinkle these four ingredients around each rose and mix into soil as well as possible. Then spread 1 shovelful of **Chicken Manure** around each rose and water in.

For roses in containers, use ½ the amounts listed and add a 3<sup>rd</sup> fertilizing in May.

\*Note: Products containing Iron can stain—be sure to wash off adjacent paving after application.

\*\*Considered a “non-staining” iron.

## The Spray Program

This program combines disease and pest control with fertilizer. The following are the ingredients that make up the basic spray and the amount of each to be combined and added to one gallon of water.

Orthenex™ -----	2 Tablespoon
Liquid Gold™ -----	1 Tablespoon
Kelp Sea Life™, or other “liquid kelp” product -----	4 Tablespoons
Vinegar -----	1 Tablespoon

The first spray should be made after your January pruning. After the dormant spray your next application will be as the new leaves emerge, then as needed thereafter. For maximum protection and feeding, you can spray every 10 days through the spring growing season.

REMEMBER, never spray or feed a thirsty plant. Always water your plants well the day before. It's important to avoid the heat of the day when treating and take care with your dilutions (don't overdose.)