

## **A Rose Primer**

Gardeners love roses for their classic beauty, exquisite colors and, of course, their fragrance.

If you're new to rose gardening, here's some information and tips to get you started:

### **Characteristics of rose types:**

**Climber:** Produces arching stems that can be trained on a trellis, arbors or fences; vigorous growers; flowers are borne singly or in clusters and are often scented

**Floribunda:** Everblooming, free-branching shrub roses with upright or bushy habit; bear clusters of 3 - 25 single to fully double blooms; sometimes fragrant; best used in a border or as a hedge

**Grandiflora & Hybrid Tea:** Free-branching shrub roses with an upright or bushy habit; bear large, usually double flowers either singly or in small clusters of 3 – 6; often scented; flowers appear sporadically summer through autumn; use as a hedge or in formal beds; excellent cut flowers

**Groundcover:** Spreading and trailing shrub roses; bear clusters of numerous single to fully double flowers; may be everblooming or bloom only spring and early summer

**Shrub:** diverse group that are usually larger than hybrid teas; single to fully double blooms can be borne singly or in clusters and are usually scented; some are everblooming, others bloom only spring and early summer; ideal for borders or hedges

**Hybrid Rugosa:** Hardy shrub roses with distinctively wrinkled (quilted) leaves; bear single to semi-double, scented flowers in clusters of 3 – 11; bloom summer through autumn and bear red hips; use as a hedge or in beds

**Miniature:** Shrub roses with very compact habit; sprays of 3 – 11 tiny, single to fully double flowers; rarely scented; best in containers or raised beds

**Polyantha:** Compact shrub roses with sprays of small, single to double blooms; flowers are rarely scented and appear in flushes from spring to autumn; do well in containers

### **Own-root vs. Grafted:**

Roses may be grown on their "own-root" or may be "grafted". In practical terms, "own-root" means literally that the rose bush is growing on its own root. If an own-root rose dies back to the ground in winter, you can cut it back all the way and the rose that re-grows from the root will be the same one you purchased.

"Grafted" means that the rose bush has been grafted on to, and so is growing on, the root of another rose. If a grafted rose dies to the ground in

winter you no longer have the rose you purchased – a different rose will grow from the rootstock.

Own-root roses are hardier than grafted roses which is why more own-root varieties are becoming available.

**Advice for growing roses in our climate:**

- Plant where they will receive at least 6 hours of sunlight a day.
- Plant in well-draining soil. Clay soil will need to be amended with amendments such as compost, gypsum or peat moss.
- Water regularly throughout the year, including twice a month in winter. Water is especially important while roses are blooming.
- Feed them well. In our infertile soil, fertilizing roses is essential. Rosarians (expert rose growers) use a combination of organic and chemical fertilizers. Organic fertilizers, such as bone meal, cottonseed meal and alfalfa, are the best choice for fall and spring as they do not force growth that could die back in a freeze. Chemical fertilizers can be used in late spring and throughout summer.
- Allow your roses enough space to attain full growth.

With this basic care, roses can be enjoyed in garden beds or in large containers.

For more help, stop by the nursery for free handouts on rose growing and pruning and advice from our staff.