

# Brief notes on planting and care of your new roses

Because our roses are containerised, they can be planted at any time of year, provided the weather and soil conditions aren't extreme. They are carefully root pruned at potting in November/December. This encourages the formation of strong and efficient roots once the soil (or compost) warms up in Spring. Before that, there will be no real root-ball so the compost will fall off when you plant your new rose. Don't worry! Mix the compost with soil in the planting hole, water the rose in well, and the roots will develop healthily in their own good time. If you plant your Wych Cross rose between say March and end of May, the new young roots will be quite delicate, so just be a bit careful when handling them. Inevitably some will get broken, but new ones will quickly form, so again don't worry unduly. From June onwards, you should find a really good strong root ball in the pot. We do operate a Plant Guarantee, which means if your new rose fails to develop and/or dies despite receiving good care from you, we will replace it free of charge. We will probably ask you about situation and planting, just in order to see if we can help you avoid losing another rose.

Roses are greedy feeders and most won't do their best unless the conditions are favourable. Basically, they like plenty of nutrients in the soil, adequate moisture and plenty of sun; mercifully there are a number of varieties which will tolerate poor soil and some shade, even growing in a north-facing position, if that's all they can get. You can give your roses the best possible start quite simply by:-

**Position:** choose full sun if you can. If you want to grow a rose where it won't see the sun for most of the day, choose a shade tolerant variety. Don't plant a rose too close to other vigorous plants which may be competing for nutrients or water, and if planting in a lawn, leave a grass-free area about 4' across. Climbing roses should be planted at least 18" away from a wall.

**Soil:** roses are not particularly fussy about the acidity of the soil, but they do generally like it to be rich in nutrients, loamy, not too sandy or too claggy. To improve soil structure as well as adding nutrients, dig in either some well-rotted manure, your own garden compost, or some Rose, Tree and Shrub compost. Alternatively you can use a bio soil conditioner. Either way, treat the area round the rose, rather than just the spot where you want to plant it, as this will not be adequate in the long term. To encourage root growth, you could put a handful of bonemeal in the bottom of the planting hole, making sure it doesn't actually touch the plant roots. Alternatively, you could use *Rootgrow*. This is a mycorrhizal fungus that occurs naturally in the soil and develops a mutually advantageous relationship with plant roots by attaching to them and greatly increasing their ability to take up nutrients. *Rootgrow* must touch the roots.

**To replant** roses in an area where roses have recently been growing, you need to dig out roughly a two-foot cube of soil around the roots; exchange this soil for some from elsewhere in the garden where no roses have grown. If this is not possible, dig out as much soil as you can, add compost or manure as above, then use *Rootgrow* – it has proved very helpful for overcoming the problems of rose replant sickness.

**Mulching** with chipped bark, or proprietary mulches, helps to suppress weeds and to retain moisture in the soil. It is generally thought to be better not to use grass-cuttings or woodchips.

**Aftercare:** water your roses well during their first summer in your garden, especially during dry spells. They prefer a really good soak every 2-3 days rather than a sprinkling every day. Feed them in March and at the end of June with a rose feed such as *Toprose*. During the flowering period, you can also add a feed that is high in potash to the water such as *Phostrogen*, *Miracle-Gro* or *Tomorite*. It can be helpful to spray against fungal diseases (blackspot, downy mildew, powdery mildew and rust). Start as soon as there is enough foliage to spray and then repeat at intervals through the summer. Never spray in full sun as this will scorch the leaves. Vary or alternate the chemicals you use.

Don't forget to prune your roses during the dormant period. Our leaflet '**It's a Snip**' gives some helpful hints.

Happy rose gardening!