

"Overwintering Roses 101"

By Tim Flood

*Hybrid tea, Floribunda, Grandiflora as well as semi-hardy and hardy Shrub roses:

1. Buy several bags of mulch to hold until its time to use them (later in November)
2. Don't trim plants back this fall at all!
3. Wait until plants have been exposed to several killing frosts and/or foliage begins to color or drop.
4. If using rose cones, cut off the tops of the cones so the plants will stick out of them (Rose cones are not necessary, and if used incorrectly without cutting vent holes, the plants underneath can and will rot.)
5. Just before the soil begins to freeze (early to mid November), add soil from other part of the yard to the base of the plants, or add the mulch you purchased earlier to the base of the plants to form a mound of about a foot. You can also add marsh hay or leaves over the tops if these mounds, but not necessary. Watch for rodents throughout the winter months.
6. In spring, if cones were used, remove the cones and once new growth resumes, then is the time to cut back these plants down to healthy green stems down as far as 5 or 6 inches. Pull soil and/or mulch away from the crown of the plants and watch them grow.

*Climbing roses (Blaze, Bright Eyes, Fourth of July, Golden Showers, Climbing Carefree Sunshine)(these are non hardy climbers) plus Ramblin' Red (which is a red rose, hardy to Zone 4, which can be left up over the winter, or treated as suggested below).

1. Dig a trench near the base of the plant about 6-8" deep.
2. Do not trim these plants
3. Wait until plants have been exposed to several killing frosts.
4. Gently pull the canes down to the trench you dug earlier as best as you can without breaking the canes off, and cover them with soil to fill the trench. You might need to use a brick or weight to help hold the canes down. You should also build a mound over the base of the canes (like the hybrid roses above).
5. In spring, just as these plants will start to begin growing, gently remove canes from the trench and put in the upright position once again. Flowers will be born on these canes that you protected over the winter. Once these canes have produced flowers (usually in June), these canes that just finished blooming can be removed down to the ground to allow new shoots to grow and develop from the base (these new shoots are the canes that you will be protecting the next fall). By removing the oldest flowering canes, it allows you to bend these younger canes over to bury much easier. You also maintain good young healthy canes, which produce the heaviest bloom.

There are three climbing roses that are perfectly hardy in our area and do not need to be protected during the winter months. Rose Setigera (the Prairie Rose is not a true climber, but is treated the same), William Baffin pillar type rose, and Ramblin' Red, our newest selection from the same man who introduced Knockout Rose. This one you may want to winter protect the first winter just to get it through they first year in good shape. These roses are great plants for training on fences, arbors, pergolas, or posts. The key is to remove the oldest wood after the June bloom and allow the nice young shoots to come up from the base to replace the stems you cut out. Any questions can be directed to the nursery.