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growing guide

Roses: Rose Problems

A rose problem, like most plant problems, is almost always a reflection of the plant's environment. Poor drainage, too little water, poor soil preparation, insects, and disease are all environmental conditions that can either be remedied or prevented from the start.

The first line of defense against any rose problem is a strong, healthy plant. A little advance preparation such as the addition of organic matter to the soil before planting, will provide a blooming environment.

Prune away the affected section, if possible. (Galls on the graft would kill the plant if pruned off.) Sterilize your pruners and other tools with a diluted bleach solution or alcohol to prevent bacteria from spreading. Destroy seriously weakened plants. Leave soil fallow for two seasons before replanting.

If your rose problem is not listed here, come talk to an expert at Hoerr Nursery for help!

Symptom	Cause	Remedy
Insect Problems Masses of bugs are seen on the buds and leaves.	Aphids-red, green or black soft insects, about 1/8" long, found mostly on new growth. They appear early and can stay around all summer.	Apply an insecticidal soap, or introduce a natural predator like Ladybeetles.
Blooms are shredded and discolored or buds are distorted.	Thrips-light brown insects, very slender, about 1/8" long. Squeeze an open bloom and watch the inside of the petals for movement. Thrips move quickly and are spread by wind.	Apply Ortho Orthene Systemic Insect Control or other products containing acephate . Spray when buds are pea-sized, then again at two week intervals.
Leaves appear fuzzy and yellow on the surface; underside has small red specks, webbing, or spider-like insects moving about. (Best seen on a piece of white paper.)	Spider mites. Microscopic in size, but visible to the naked eye. Hot weather is prime spider-mite season. Activity increases or decreases with temperature changes.	Spray water at high pressure to wash them away and apply an insecticidal soap. The treatment must be applied from the bottom-up in order to contact the mites, which are always on the underside of the leaf.
Leaves have been eaten leaving either skeleton structure or mid-ribs. Unopened flower buds are chewed and open buds damaged.	Beetles; most notorious is the Japanese beetle, metallic brown with a green head. (Caterpillars can also cause the same symptoms.)	Apply Fertilome Sevin or a spray containing permethrin. For immediate removal, knock beetles off the leaves into a cup of soapy water.
Leaves are stuck together, unopened buds have holes bored into them.	Omnivorous leaf roller. This is a moth larvae that makes a cocoon-like structure with leaves.	Apply American Brand Thuricide Concentrate containing Bt, a natural, caterpillar-specific insecticide. Or apply Ortho Orthene Systemic Insect at two week intervals.
Holes can be seen in pruned cane ends. Circular pieces are cut from leaf margins.	Leaf cutter bee. They use the circular leaf pieces for egg partitions inside the burrowed cane.	Control by applying white glue to the cane ends. There is no reason to spray the foliage; the damage is cosmetic only.
Drooping, unopened buds, are accompanied by a small discolored stem slightly below the bud.	Rose Midge. A small fly that pupates in the ground below the bush, then flies up and lays eggs in soft upper stem. The larvae eat the stems and cause breakage.	Apply a chemical spray once every other week.

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<p>Cultural Problems Slow starting roses</p>	<p>Dry canes, dry roots are a possible cause</p>	<p>Water heavily during the first 3 weeks. Spray canes during the day. After 3 weeks, if rose is not showing growth, sweat the plant by lacing wet sphagnum moss in the center of the crown and cover canes with a clear polyethylene bag or burlap to force new growth. Be careful of excessive heat buildup. Check daily for sign or bud growth, then remove.</p>
<p>Sucker growth</p>	<p>This is seen on grafted plants, and it occurs when the rootstock is trying to grow out around the graft. This growth is usually very rapid, producing long canes with no lower leaf buds. Foliage is a lighter color and thorns are spaced differently than the rest of the plant.</p>	<p>Wearing gloves, grasp firmly and snap or pull off from below ground level. Be sure the growth originates from below the graft. Bottom or basal growth from graft can be confused with suckers. When in doubt, allow the growth to continue until the difference is visible. Remove suckers throughout the growing season. They are not symptoms of a sick plant but of a healthy, vigorous one.</p>
<p>Disease Problems Leaves fold at mid-rib or are distorted. White powdery material appears on the forming buds and leaf tops or undersides.</p>	<p>Powdery Mildew. Fostered by cool nights, warm days and high humidity.</p>	<p>Begin spray applications when new growth appears. Use a product that contains chlorothalonil, copper, copper sulfate, or potassium bicarbonate.</p>
<p>Dark black spots on the leaves. The spots tend to be round, varying in size from pin-point to quarter-sized. Half of leaf yellows or leaf drops completely from the plant.</p>	<p>Black Spot. This fungus prospers in rainy weather or due to improper watering.</p>	<p>Control begins in early spring. Apply a dormant oil-lime-sulphur spray like Fertilome Liquid Fungicide containing Daconil. The fungus spores are on leaf undersides so spray up from underneath in the early morning when it's calm and cool. When watering, keep foliage dry or water in the morning so foliage dries by midday. Remove any dropped leaves or other debris promptly to reduce the spread of infection.</p>
<p>Brown spots on petals, also red-pink spots on lighter colored flower buds. Brown dieback of cut canes; brown fuzzy mold on debris around plant. In severe cases, the entire bud rots.</p>	<p>Botrytis blight. A fungus that develops during high-humidity nights or rainy cool periods.</p>	<p>Spray with Fertilome Liquid Fungicide containing Daconil. Clean up all twigs on the plant and leaves and debris below to prevent fungus from spreading. Maintain good air circulation.</p>
<p>Dark, irregular splotches on the leaves, dropping of healthy leaves, yellowed leaf sections.</p>	<p>Downy mildew. A systemic fungus disease. It is present in the soil and will begin to cause problems when night temperatures reach 55° to 65°, with still air measuring 85% humidity.</p>	<p>Cut back the defoliated plant. Clean up debris, dust with sulfur, and spray with Fertilome Liquid Fungicide containing Daconil. Spray in the morning so it will dry before hot mid-day temperatures.</p>
<p>Tumor-like growths on canes, roots or at the bud union.</p>	<p>Gall, either aerial, crown or root. This is a bacterial problem that enters through a wound or contaminated pruning tool.</p>	<p>Prune away the affected section. (Galls on the graft would kill the plant if pruned off.) Be sure to sterilize pruners and other tools with bleach or alcohol to prevent bacteria from spreading. Destroy seriously weakened plants. Leave soil fallow for two seasons before replanting.</p>





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Roses: Winterizing Your Roses

Winter Kill

Winter kill is caused by extreme cold temperatures - greater than a plant can tolerate. Winter kill susceptibility is often genetic, that is, an individual species or variety is not and never will, be able to survive a Zone 5 winter.

The Basics

Fertilizing

Don't fertilize your roses after August 15. The new growth will not sufficiently 'harden off' in time for winter.

Pruning

Prune roses when the growing season is over, after two or three hard freezes, usually in late October. Cut back any long canes to about 24" tall, reducing wind whip. Remove just enough to bring the plant into balance.

Mulching & Covering

After leaves fall, when the plants are dormant, remove all fallen leaves and spent roses. Once the soil is frozen, apply a layer of organic mulch, 8" to 10" deep, over the crown of your roses. Garden soil, Mushroom Compost, Cypress or Cedar Bark, Shredded Hardwood, pine needles, and straw all work well. Don't de-mulch or uncover your roses until the spring thaw is in full swing.

A Few Specifics

Miniature Roses

These are inherently hardier. While they don't require the above protection, it certainly won't hurt them.

Hybrid Tea, Floribundas, Grandifloras

These types must be protected. Use the methods described above.

Climbing Roses

The most commonly available varieties are very hardy in Central Illinois. Prune only dead or broken canes. Removing healthy wood will eliminate many of next year's flowers.

Tree Roses

Tree Roses left unprotected during the winter will not survive. The graft, the most vulnerable part of the plant, cannot be left exposed to our winter weather. Leave your Tree rose in a container and move it into a shed or an unheated garage during the winter. Check it for water once a month or so.

If you planted your Tree Rose in the ground, cut the roots around half the plant with a sharp spade. Lay it over into a trench and completely cover (bury) it with 6" of soil. If you don't have enough room to do this, drive a secure stake in the soil next to the rose. Tie the plant to it. This will keep it from bending and cracking during winter gales. Next, build a cage out of chicken wire around the rose. Fill the cage with straw. Then wrap burlap around the cage and secure with strong twine.

Rugosa Roses

This class needs no protection whatsoever.

Heirloom, Modern, Shrub, English & Romantica Roses

Though generally very hardy, most of these roses are grafted, so it's a good idea to protect these varieties, especially the first two years after planting. Cut back any long, lanky canes and mulch as you would a Hybrid Tea.

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