



ROSE PROBLEMS

Growing roses in Washington State gardens is easy, but regular care and maintenance is needed to keep them healthy and attractive. [Growing Roses in Washington State: A Seasonal Calendar](#) is a quick guide to the year-round tasks required to grow beautiful roses.

COMMON CULTURAL PROBLEMS

Symptoms	Possible Cause	Cultural Controls
New roses slow to start growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roots allowed to dry out before planting. • Insufficient moisture in plant tissue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soak entire plant for 24 hours before planting • Keep canes moist by covering with moist burlap • Hill soil around new plants for one to two weeks if weather is very hot at planting time
New foliage dies, is stunted or off-color	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive salts from over fertilizing • Insufficient moisture in soil • Fertilizing too often in cool, cloudy weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water heavily twice. First to put fertilizer salts in suspension, next to leach the salts from soil • The soil around roses should be moist before fertilizing
“Leggy” plants and few or no blooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location too shady • Too much competition from other plants • Lack of fertilizer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant in areas where bushes receive at least 6 hours of sun a day • Roses do best in an open area with little competition from other plants • Fertilize regularly
Blooms/buds fail to develop properly, resulting in a half-open condition termed “balling”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cool nights or dark wet weather • Thrips may also be the cause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut bloom off as soon as it starts to ball
Normal canes do not have flower buds and quit growing, a condition called “blindshoots”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is characteristic of a cool spring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut back canes as though removing a faded flower

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Symptoms	Possible Cause	Cultural Controls
Flower buds grow bent, lopsided or parallel to the ground, a condition called “funny bud”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth defect induced by the speed of spring growth and/or severe changes in weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut off the damaged flowers to promote new growth
Bullheading (cold damage). Flower buds have a flat-topped appearance and weigh more than normal buds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low temperatures (53-59 degrees Fahrenheit) during early flower development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In spring, prune bullheads and allow new flowers to develop in warmer weather. Do not fertilize, prune or water late into the season. This can encourage growth that cannot acclimate well into the autumn.

INSECT PESTS AND ROSE DISEASES

The most common disease and insect problems that occur on roses in Washington are discussed in WSU publication, [Growing Roses in Washington State: Common Disease and Insect Problems](#).