



Miniature Roses

Miniature roses are true roses with small flowers, canes and foliage. The term miniature defines the size of the rose's blooms (usually not over 2 inches) and its leaves (smaller than might be expected in proportion to its height).

Miniature roses are very versatile plants in your landscape. They come in many colors, come in several sizes, and forms and grow very successfully in the ground or in containers outside. Generally, they bloom continuously from April to October. They can be planted in a border, fill in a difficult corner or planted for contrast in front of larger and more heavily foliated plants. They are ideal for today's smaller gardens, rock gardens, decks or patios and for all types of containers including hanging baskets. Garden minis do very poorly indoors and will rarely survive in normal home conditions. Like larger varieties, some are more fragrant than others.

TYPES OF MINIATURES ROSES

- Micro-miniatures: range in height from 4" to 5" range in width from 6" to 12"
- Miniatures: short – range from 12" to 16" tall medium – range from 16" to 24" tall – over 24" tall
- Mini florals: generally, range from 16" to over 24" tall with bloom and foliage size similar to miniatures, or slightly large
- Climbing minis: long arching canes up to 6' long that require support to stay upright.

CULTURE

Miniature roses grow on their own roots, which makes them hardier than grafted roses. They have an extensive but shallow root system that requires regular water, fertilizer, and mulch. Miniature roses like at least 6 hours of sun and adequate moisture.

SOURCE

Growers or hybridizers are the most dependable source for these special plants. Although miniature roses are available in locations other than nurseries, they are frequently not intended to be a permanent outside plant, but enjoyed inside for a limited time.

WATER

Visit our website at <https://extension.wsu.edu/spokane/master-gardener-program/home-lawn-and-garden/>
e-mail your garden questions to: mastergardener@spokanecounty.org

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Roses grow best in evenly moist soil. Irrigate roses as needed when the top 2 inches of soil become dry. Never allow the soil to dry out. Soil moisture can be checked by inserting a trowel or small shovel and observing the amount of moisture in the soil. The soil should be moist, not wet, to a depth of 8–12 inches. Avoid wetting plant foliage by using drip irrigation or soaker hoses. If this is not possible, water in the morning. This allows enough time for the foliage to dry before nightfall and helps prevent fungal diseases.

SOIL TESTING AND FERTILIZING

Perform a soil test and if the results indicate any nutrient deficiencies, fertilize your rose bushes before new growth begins. Apply fertilizers containing only the deficient nutrients as indicated by soil test results.

A soil test will also help determine the current pH of the soil in the area which you are considering for a rose bed. A slightly acid soil with a pH between 6.5 and 6.8 helps make the major nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and magnesium) more available to your plants. In soil with a low pH (very acid), roses may experience toxicity problems with aluminum, iron, manganese, and zinc; low soil pH affects flowering and shoot and root growth. Take particular care with fertilizers containing phosphorus (phosphate) including bone meal because phosphorus runoff is a problem in Washington State.

A level of 5%–10% organic matter is ideal. Excessive organic matter can lead to drainage problems and nutrient overload. If a soil test indicates a need for organic matter, work a 1- to 2-inch layer of finished compost into the soil prior to planting.

PLANTING

- Just like other roses, miniatures require a minimum of 6 hours of sun.
- Plants like morning sunlight if possible and good air circulation which helps reduce the risk of disease.
- Do not plant roses where they will have to compete with other trees and shrubs for space, light, water, or nutrients.
- Space minis of average size 12 to 14 inches apart. Spacing for larger minis is determined by their spread at maturity.

Bare-rooted roses

- Bare-root roses should be planted at the same level that they were growing in the nursery, with the roots just below the soil.
- When ready to plant, carefully remove the packaging and the packing materials from around the roots.
- Submerge the entire plant in a bucket of tepid water. It should soak at least 12 hours to rehydrate the root system after several days or even weeks of exposure to less than perfect moisture conditions. If you are delayed in planting, it can soak for 3-4 days, but change the water daily to discourage bacterial growth.
- Immediately prior to planting, remove the plant from the water and trim the roots using clean pruning shears to remove any dead, damaged, or broken roots. Prune broken roots just above the break. Cut back any extra-long, straggly roots to a length of no less than 10 inches.
- The planting hole should be wide enough and deep enough to comfortably accommodate the root system. A hole 24 inches wide and 12 inches deep is generally adequate. You want to plant where the

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bud union is an inch or two below the soil line. The bud union is the knobby spot where the roots meet the canes.

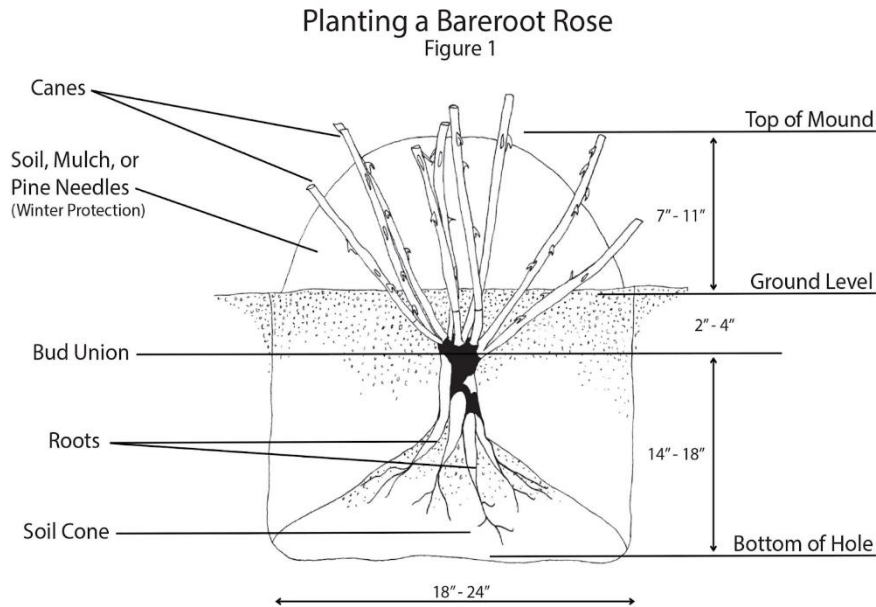


Diagram from Colorado State University

- Before placing the bare-root rose in the planting hole, place a mound of soil in the bottom hole to support the plant. Rotate the plant so that the taller canes are facing the backside of the bed and the smaller canes are facing forward. As you place the plant on the mound of soil in the hole, spread the roots out evenly over the mound.
- Fill 2/3 of the planting hole with the original soil that was removed from the hole.
- Stop and add enough water to fill the hole and then let the excess water drain. Fill the hole completely with soil and water again to help settle the soil around the roots and remove any air pockets.
- Do not press down firmly on the soil when wet, as this compacts the soil.
- To keep the newly planted rose from drying out until it recovers from planting shock, build up more soil in a cone around the stems. Keep the soil moist.
- Provide 2 to 3 inches of organic mulch around the plant. This will help conserve moisture, keep plant roots cool, control weeds without using chemicals. Keep the mulch about 6 inches away from the base of the plant.

Planting Potted Roses

- Harden off the rose outdoors for 3-4 days prior to planting, watering it daily. The plant should have time to become well established in its new location before the first killing frost in the fall.
- Prepare the planting hole similar as for bare root roses.
- Remove the plant from the container and place it in the hole without disturbing the root ball.
- If the rose roots are pot bound, break up the root ball with your hands. Circling roots can be detrimental to your rose long-term growth.
- Make sure the bud union is planted 2-4" below ground level.
- Fill in around the root ball with soil.

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- Water newly planted roses every day for three days; then twice a week for two weeks. Then begin deep watering once a week.

PRUNING

In the spring before roses leaf out, prune off old, dead, diseased or crossing canes. Miniature roses are pruned in much the same way as hybrid teas only on a smaller scale. Prune the healthy canes 4 to 6 inches long and remove all twiggy growth. Miniatures are very vigorous and will respond well to severe pruning by producing new basal breaks; that is new stems originating from below ground.

Dead head throughout the season. The pruning cut should be made at approximately a 45-degree angle, about 1/4" above a leaf bud. When possible, prune to an outward-facing bud. This will promote an open center and allow for greater airflow throughout the bush, again helping to avoid potential diseases.

To allow the plants to prepare for winter dormancy, do not deadhead roses in late summer. Pruning in late summer or fall can encourage new growth, which is more vulnerable to winter damage from cold temperatures.

WINTER CARE

Though own-root roses are hardier, miniature roses can benefit from a covering of pine needles or straw for extra protection in the winter. Just before the ground freezes, mound soil about 12 inches in and around canes. Take soil from another part of the garden -- don't use the soil under the bushes, as it would expose roots and crown to winter injury. After the soil mound has frozen, the mound can be covered with dried leaves, pine needles or straw to help insulate and keep the soil mound frozen. The key is to be sure that the material is well drained. Your objective is to prevent alternate freezing and thawing of the soil mound.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Miniature roses are prone to the same pests and diseases as regular roses. Powdery Mildew and Black Spot are two fungal diseases that can occur if there is not enough adequate air circulation and watering is done overhead. If roses were infected with Powdery Mildew or Black Spot during the season, remove any remaining leaves on the shrubs and dispose of them. Consider removing cultivars that are susceptible to disease and insect pests and replacing them with resistant cultivars to reduce your use of pesticides.

Aphids, spider mites, caterpillars, and slugs are common insect pests of roses. Manage pests according to the WSU site, Hortsense at <https://hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/ornamentals/>

MINIATURES IN CONTAINERS

Minis are easily grown in pots, which provides the advantage of moving them to where color is needed. Pots should be at least 6 inches deep and 8 to 12 inches across. Miniatures should be dug into the ground (pot and all) during the winter or kept in the garage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

[WSU Extension Publications|Growing Roses in Washington State: Planting Roses](#)
[American Rose Society](https://www.rose.org) <https://www.rose.org>

For additional information on growing miniature roses, contact the American Rose Society, P.O. Box 30,000, Shreveport, LA 71130-0030. Their phone number is (800) 637-6534.