



"I perhaps owe having become a painter to flowers." ~Claude Monet

General rules for growing roses.

- plant in full sun (need at least 6 hours)
- well drained loamy soil
- feed with organic rose food before flowering and once per month during the season
- cut back entire plant to about 1/3 (use diagonal cuts) also cut out completely any dead or spindly canes.
- water frequently. They need about 2" per week during growing season.
- stick with Rugosa and Knockout and you won't have to use insecticides or fungicides.



"It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important."

~ANTOINE DE ST. EXUPERY, THE LITTLE PRINCE

Gardening by-the-sea

by Steve Murray Photos of Janet Brown by Rob Kulisek

Most avid gardeners wouldn't think their gardens were complete without some roses. They have been the "queen" of the garden since ancient times. They are often mentioned in early Greek and Roman writings and were used by them as symbols of beauty, love and in association with their gods.

Native to many parts of the world, modern varieties of various colors and longer blooming periods began to show up by the early 19th century as botanists began cross breeding and experimenting. As a result today we have hundreds as new cultivars are introduced each year. They range from tiny miniatures to climbers to huge shrubs, with countless flower forms and colors from which to choose.

Roses generally need a lot more care than most plants. They are very susceptible to some insects such as aphids and Japanese beetles and diseases such as black spot and rose rust. Because of this, they need to be kept on a regular spraying program that most gardeners would rather avoid.

Folks living at the seashore know how challenging it is to have a garden here. The damaging winds, salt spray, sandy soil, dry summers and occasional flooding make for an entirely different and much harsher environment than that found on the mainland. These conditions make it especially difficult for roses. There are two varieties, however, that are almost immune to not just the diseases and insects, but also to the seashore problems.

Rugosa Rose

This is originally native to coastal Asia, like many other good seashore plants such as Japanese Black Pine, Hollywood Juniper, Montauk Daisy, Salt Cedar and others. It is so salt tolerant I have seen it growing the sand dunes. Many gardeners say the harsher the conditions, the better these roses do.

Rugosa is a shrub rose that can grow 4-6' tall and 3-4' wide. The original form (rubra) has dark pink single flowers that are fragrant. They bloom continually from May to frost and in between flowering produce a large red fruit (rose hips).

Rugosa is low care and hardy but has a few bad traits. They have long sharp thorns and also can be invasive because they produce new plants by spreading from their roots.

There are many new cultivars with different colors to choose from but none are as hardy as the single dark pink variety that is close to the original form. A good second choice however, would be the single white variety.

Knockout Rose

This is another good seashore rose although it isn't quite as salt tolerant as the Rugosa. I wouldn't recommend them any closer than a block from the beach. This is, however, the nicer choice of the two if your garden isn't fully exposed to the ocean and most gardeners can have great success with it.

There are several colors and forms to choose from the Knockout "family" of roses. Light and dark pink, red, doubles and singles are all available. All of these varieties are good choices and have the same habits. I think this is one of the best plants introduced during my 30 year career as a garden designer and can't say enough good things about them.

The Knockouts grow slightly smaller (3-4) than the rugosa. They do not sucker (spread from the roots) and their thorns are not as bad as the former. They are also completely self cleaning, meaning you do not have to deadhead the spent flowers.

Steve Murray is Superintendent of Parks for this seaside town of North Wildwood. His love for gardening resulted in the award-winning gardens of the Hereford Inlet Lighthouse.

"If I had a rose for every time I thought of you, I'd be picking roses for a lifetime." ~ SWEDISH PROVERB

"Won't you come into the garden? I would like my roses to see you."
~RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

"A wildflower on a mountaintop would not change places with a rose in the garden." ~ARMENIAN PROVERB

"You can complain because roses have thorns, or you can rejoice because thorns have roses." ~ZIGGY

"Love is a rose and you better not pick it, it only grows when it's on the vine."
~LINDA RONSTADT

"a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose. . ."
~GERTRUDE STEIN



"I'd rather have roses on my table than diamonds on my neck"

~EMMA GOLDMAN



Janet Brown who celebrated her 90th Birthday on June 10th, 2009, lives in the oldest house in North Wildwood, near the Hereford Inlet Lighthouse. She is passionate about gardening. Her favorite flower is the rose.

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"A bit of fragrance always clings to the hand that gives roses."

~CHINESE PROVERB

