

Taylor's 50 *BEST*
Roses



Easy Plants for More Beautiful Gardens

TAYLOR'S 50 BEST

Roses

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Pownal, Vermont

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Roses

Frances Tenenbaum, Series Editor



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INTRODUCTION

Roses represent love and beauty. Their colors and fragrance create the standard by which many other flowers are measured. Cultivated around the world for perfume, roses have a sweet and unforgettable scent. Roses come in most colors except blue. Yet many would-be rose gardeners believe they require constant care: pruning, deadheading, training, feeding, and lavish doses of sprays and chemicals. Roses do require attention, particularly the hybrid teas, but their glorious flowers make all your efforts worthwhile.

The roses in this book were chosen because they are tried-and-true, proven performers under the conditions stated with each selection. Their flowers are lovely, each with a distinctive character and some with fragrances that linger in your memory long after the last rose of autumn has faded away.

The World of Roses

To simplify your understanding of this large and variable family of flowers, the featured roses have been divided into six groups.

Species roses grow naturally in the wild. Typically, they produce flowers with five petals and come true from seed. They tend to be vigorous, ranging plants, ideal for settings where you want them to spread out and fill with blooms.

Shrub roses is a class for roses that don't fit into the other groups. Some were bred by crossing sweet-scented, many-petaled, old garden roses and more recent hybrid teas or other modern roses. In this category are ground cover roses, hybrid rugosa roses, English roses, and others.

Old garden roses are those that were grown in the nineteenth century and earlier; they were mostly cultivated before 1867, when the first hybrid tea rose was developed. They are further subdivided into approximately thirteen classes including gallica, alba, Bourbon, tea, damask, and centifolia. Usually they bloom once each growing

season in early summer, finishing before the onslaught of Japanese beetles that devour other roses in much of the country.

Climbers and *ramblers*, with training, can grow over trellises, arbors, and buildings. They can also stand alone to form a lush, free-form mound.

Floribundas, *grandifloras*, and *hybrid teas* are popular rose groups. While the bushy, cluster-flowering floribundas and grandifloras are a fairly recent development, hybrid teas date back to the mid-eighteenth century. Hybrid tea roses are prized for their elegant high-centered blooms, long stems, and wide choice of colors as well as their often delightful fragrance.

Miniature roses are very small. While a climbing miniature rose may reach 10 feet tall, the typical mini is 8 to 24 inches high. The flowers, leaves, and even thorns are all in scale with one another.

How to Use This Book

Let the pictures that follow inspire you to grow roses of your own. Or if you already grow roses from one or two categories, study the entries for unfamiliar plants and try something new. Why garden, after all, if you can't have fun?

Whichever rose you choose, whether it climbs over an arbor or edges a little flower bed, savor it. Learn about roses firsthand by growing them, nurturing them, moving them when they do not thrive, replacing them if they die, all the time increasing your knowledge of and joy in what many consider the most perfect of flowers. Included in the box that accompanies each rose photo is information about the necessary growing conditions and vital statistics of each rose. The box also includes bloom time, using the designations common to reference books, rose nursery catalogs, and plant tags. Naturally, the exact date or month varies depending on where you garden and that year's weather conditions.

Early: This means the rose blooms in late spring or early summer.

Midseason: The rose begins blooming in early to midsummer.

All Season: It blooms continuously, from early summer through fall.

Caring for Your Roses

Individual growing requirements and suggestion for care are included with each rose, but there are some general cultural and maintenance procedures that apply to all roses.

Siting: Take into account the shade tolerance, height, and width of the roses you choose to grow. Leave room for the shrubs to mature.

Preparing the Hole: Dig an ample hole, 2 feet wide and deep (somewhat less for smaller plants), and amend the soil with compost, well-rotted manure, leaf mold, dampened peat moss, or store-bought humus. If you're inclined to measure, use at least one part organic material to two parts soil. If your soil is heavy with clay, use sand mixed with humus or crumbly rotted manure to increase the drainage. Add a couple of handfuls of bonemeal or superphosphate to the hole to promote root growth. To avoid compacted soil, don't plant your rose when the soil is wet.

Planting: For a bareroot rose, soak the roots of the plant in water at least overnight or for 24 hours. Then set it in the hole on a crown of mounded soil and spread out the roots evenly. For a containerized rose, pop it out of its pot and tease apart the roots, especially if they're congested. Put it in a hole that is larger than the pot it came in. In either case, cover the plant so the bud graft is buried under 1 inch of soil in northern areas; it should be about 1 inch above the soil surface in warm regions. With your hands, pack the soil around the base of the plant. Water deeply.

Mulching: After planting, spread a 2-inch layer of mulch such as rotted manure or compost over the root zone to retain moisture and keep the soil cool. Renew in fall after the ground has frozen and again each spring when leaves begin to emerge.

Fertilizing: Once established, mound composted manure around each shrub. You may also fertilize lightly with a complete rose food in spring as buds begin to break and again after the first bloom begins to fade.

Pruning: Before bud break, remove dead, damaged, or crowded canes. Information about how much to prune the healthy canes of individual roses is noted with each entry; the best time is generally while the bush is dormant, in late winter or early spring. To shape a rosebush, just trim the branch tips by making an angled cut $\frac{1}{4}$ inch above an outward-facing bud.

Pest Control: If you live in an area of lush lawns, then Japanese beetles may be a problem. Pick them off by hand in the cool of the morning when they won't fly away, dropping them into a cup of soapy water to drown them. Spray grassy areas with milky spore or predatory nematodes. Rose stem girdler is a small green beetle that lays its eggs near the base of rose canes. When the soft-bodied grubs hatch, they feed on the stems, causing a swollen area, sometimes accompanied by splitting of the bark. To control, promptly prune out and destroy infested canes.

Disease Control: Roses get mildew and black spot, among other maladies. Always remove and dispose of affected leaves and canes; in fall, rake and remove dead leaves from around the shrub. Spray susceptible bushes each spring just as leaves are emerging and again throughout the season as needed. See individual entries for specific information.

Cold Weather: Determine the cold hardiness of the roses you like to see if they coincide with the area where you live. Most likely, your property has microclimates where tender plants can remain protected and relatively warm year-round, while others are fully exposed to the elements. In Zones 6 and north, protect roses from winter damage by mounding 12 inches of soil or mulch over the base of each plant in fall after the ground has frozen. The addition of rose cones, or straw and chicken wire, may also be warranted, and helps protect the plants from the devastating effects of freeze and thaw cycles. The following spring, do not bare the roses until danger of frost is past.

PASTURE ROSE

Species (*Rosa carolina*)



Zones: 4–8

Size: 3–6 ft. tall,
3–6 ft. wide

Bloom Time: Mid-
season

Bloom Width: 2 in.

Fragrance: Moderate

Thorniness: Slight

The pasture rose is a species native to the eastern United States. In midseason, the small flowers appear singly, for the most part, although some grow in small clusters. The rose has sweetly scented blossoms with five medium pink petals that are followed by small, bright red hips in fall. Pasture rose has a strong suckering habit, and it forms a thicket if its growth is left unchecked. Its canes are fairly smooth, though not thorn-free. This vigorous plant is disease-free and winter hardy except in extremely cold areas.

HOW TO GROW

Sited in full sun, pasture rose has deep green leaves and abundant flowers. In dappled shade, the growth is more open with fewer blossoms. It is an adaptable plant, thriving in the rich, loamy soils of upland forests and

prairies but growing equally well in sandy soils and coastal conditions. Amend clay soils with organic matter to improve drainage and inhibit compacting. Once established, the plant produces many suckers. Remove up to half of these each spring to maintain a neat, mounded habit and increase flower production.

HOW TO USE

Because of its naturally wild appearance and tendency to grow densely, pasture rose works well at the edges of thickets or on property boundaries. In such settings, it can form a coarse, informal hedge away from the organized architecture of the home.

Top Choices

- 'Plena' is a double rose with outer petals that whiten as they age; the plant is not quite as tall as the species.
- *R. laevigata*, Cherokee rose, is a Chinese species that has naturalized throughout the Southeast. Its large, white, single flowers are fragrant and are followed by showy hips.
- *R. palustris*, swamp rose, is another U.S. native that tolerates wetter soil than most roses. Its sweet-scented pink flowers appear late in the season.
- *R. villosa*, apple rose, has fragrant, pink, single flowers followed by showy hips that resemble small apples.

FOR THE BIRDS

A rose with dense growth is a good choice for attracting birds because it provides a comfortable, protected nest site. You may observe robins, bluebirds, or quail. Don't be surprised to see sparrows, towhees, and cardinals nesting in the tightly woven branches of larger rosebushes.

Rose hips are an important food source for some birds during barren winter months. A disease-resistant rose such as the pasture rose is best because you won't need to use chemical sprays that harm birds.

When selecting your rose, look for a plant that will produce small hips such as the pasture rose. Large, showy ones are too big for birds to eat.

WHO CAN I TALK TO?

An excellent source of rose information is the American Rose Society; P.O. Box 30,000; Shreveport, LA 71130-0030 or telephone 318-938-5402. If you have a question of a local nature, such as which roses are easiest to grow in your area, the organization has a national network of consulting rosarians and can refer you to one nearby.

SWEETBRIAR ROSE

Species (*Rosa eglanteria*)



Zones: 5–9

Size: 8–10 ft. tall,
8 ft. wide

Bloom Time: Early,
with no repeat

Bloom Width: 1–1½ in.

Fragrance: Moderate

Thorniness: Very

Sweetbriar rose is a familiar sight in the hedgerows of its native England. Known by several names—eglantine, sweetbriar, and Shakespeare's rose—it bears clusters of petite flowers with five pink petals and flashy yellow stamens. These occur early in the season with no repeat, and have a sweet rose scent; they are followed later in the season by clusters of large (about an inch in diameter), scarlet, oval hips. A special feature of this rose is its foliage, which smells of green apples, especially when brushed against or crushed. Warm, moist winds and rain also release the fragrance of the leaves. The extremely thorny canes are long, upright, arching, and covered with small, glossy green leaves. This vigorous plant is disease-free.

HOW TO GROW

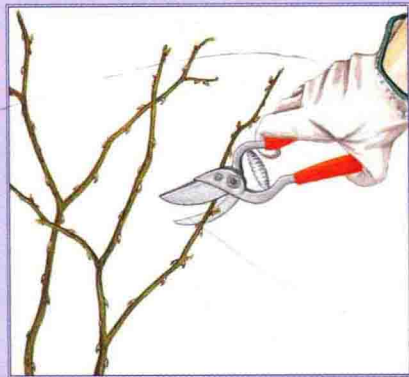
Site sweetbriar rose in full sun, in well-drained soil amended with large amounts of organic matter. It needs neutral to slightly alkaline conditions. Spring pruning creates a compact, impenetrable hedge, but it sacrifices the best flowering shoots. You may remove some older shoots in July after blooming to give newer shoots the space to mature and grow (note that young foliage has a stronger scent).

HOW TO USE

Sweetbriar rose makes a terrific barrier and privacy hedge because of its dense, upright, arching growth and thorny canes. A classic cottage-garden plant, this rose looks best rambling with other shrubs and flowers at the garden's edge, where it can serve as a transition to the wilder part of your property.

Top Choices

- 'Hebe's Lip' is a fragrant hybrid sweetbriar with semidouble white blossoms and gold stamens. It stands 4 feet tall and blooms early and abundantly, with no repeat.
- 'Lord Penzance' has soft, yellow, single blooms, borne on an extremely vigorous bush that quickly reaches 8 feet high and wide.



MAKING A PROPER PRUNING CUT

While cutting into a healthy rose branch may cause a moment of trepidation, the positive results will make any anxiety worthwhile.

- ① Buy quality pruning shears, and keep them sharp. Inexpensive and dull ones crush or mash rather than slice.
- ② Make your cut just above a healthy, outward-facing bud or a promising side branch. The goal is to inspire new growth that grows away from the center of the bush, not into it.

Conventional wisdom counsels about ¼ inch above, but do your best. If you cut too far from a bud, the result is a dead stub that may invite disease into the stem. If you cut too close to a bud, it can dry out or be damaged by freezing weather.

- ③ Always cut at a slant to the stem, at about a 45-degree angle. Such cuts dry out faster after a rain, and too much dampness encourages disease.
- ④ Ideally, the cut should slope downward toward the center of the bush.