

Growing Roses in Central Indiana

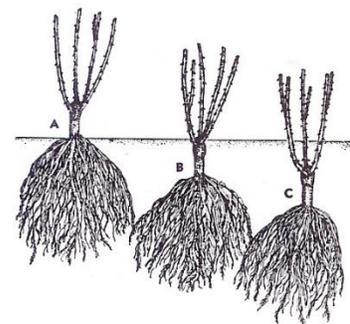
Roses can provide beauty and variety to the flower garden. And because they are perennial plants, they also provide economical advantages to the gardener. By following certain guidelines, you can successfully maintain and winter over rose bushes in central Indiana. First, roses require a sunny location. If the location you have in mind doesn't have at least six hours of direct sun a day, then don't plant your roses there. Any good garden soil is adequate, but you should avoid areas with poor drainage or extremely hard, dry soil. However, if you want to plant roses in this kind of soil, then amend the soil with peat moss, sand, or compost.

Our rose bushes come from Week's Roses, one of the largest commercial rose growers in the United States. Since 1938, Week's has been providing top-quality rose varieties for growers all over the country. We receive bare-root rose bushes, pot them, and grow them to make sure they are acclimated and rooted before you buy them. When planting, remove the pot or at least the upper half of the fiber pot in which your plant is growing. Place the rose deep enough for the bud union to be about 2 inches lower than ground level. (See diagram below.) Once planted, keep the rose watered thoroughly for the first month. It will take time for the roots to develop enough to maintain the plant. To ensure good growth and blooms, roses should be fed monthly beginning in early April, but no later than mid-July. Any balanced fertilizer will do (such as 5-10-5 or 12-12-12 worked into the soil). Apply at a rate of one heaping tablespoon around each rose bush at monthly intervals.

Winter protection is VERY important in central Indiana. The biggest problems come from fluctuations in temperature and dehydration of the canes. Roses should be allowed to "harden off" in late fall. Full protection should be given no sooner than December 1. At that time, cut the plant down to a manageable size. About 1/3 of the overall size of the plant should be removed. Mound the soil up above the plant about 10 inches and place coarse straw or other organic mulch over the soil. Fencing around the plant will help to keep the mulch in place. The mulch and soil mound should be removed in the spring once the frost is out of the ground—usually by mid-March to April 1. At this time, remove all dead and diseased wood, weak growth, and interfering canes. This will amount to about half the canes.

Each spring is the time to start a good spray program. This spray program should continue throughout the summer at ten-to-fourteen day intervals. A combination insecticide/fungicide is your best bet. When watering your plants, water the soil and not the plant. Splashing water on the foliage is a sure way to spread insects and disease.

If you want more of a "fuss-free" rose, consider planting floribundas, shrub types, or the new Knock Out® series. Those who are serious about roses would do well to buy one of the many useful publications or books available on the market. If you have any questions, feel free to ask us at Garden Gate Greenhouse, Inc. We are happy to serve you!



- A – Planted too shallow
- B – Proper depth—graft union well covered
- C – Planted too deep