



'Peggy Martin' - a flood-tough rose extraordinaire!

Rose Care

Before & After a Flood

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Living in Southeast Texas unfortunately brings the possibility of heavy rain and flooding when storms come in from the Gulf. There are things gardeners can do before and after a flood to save their beautiful roses.

Planting roses in raised beds can help them survive days of rain or flooding. When designing new beds raise them 6 to 8 inches or higher. Landscape timbers are a good choice; other materials such as brick



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or stone can be used. The soil in the beds should be high quality friable rose soil. This allows the excess water to drain away from the roots.

Soil compaction and contaminants from floodwaters are two problems that can be deadly to roses after a flood. When floodwaters sit on a rose bed the soil becomes compacted due to the weight of the water, oxygen is squeezed out of the soil and rose roots can no longer perform their job of delivering nutrients to the plant.

After floodwaters have subsided, here are steps to rehabilitate rose beds:

Rinse mud covered foliage; this reduces the likelihood of disease spreading through wounds on leaves and canes.

Remove storm muck from the base of the plants.

Inspect for broken canes and remove them.

No major pruning or fertilizing at this time, the plant is already stressed.

After initial clean up, keep beds clean, and remove diseased leaves.

Wear gardening gloves to protect hands and arms, be safe.

According to Baxter Williams, Master Consulting Rosarian and Past President of the Houston Rose Society the steps above will help, but "the thing to do is get air into the soggy soil."

Use a spading fork, plunge it into the soil about 12 inches from the rootstock or base of the plant.

Wiggle it back and forth to create holes to allow the air to move down into the soil. Do this in several locations around the plant.

Be patient! Recovery from flooding may take several weeks.

When the roses begin to show new growth, help them to recover by feeding the soil. Use a water-soluble organic fertilizer containing humates at half strength.

The symbol of a tough, tenacious rose that survived twenty feet of salt water in Hurricane Katrina is the "Peggy Martin Rose." Roses are survivors.