



SOME ROSE TIPS FROM BAXTER WILLIAMS

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Rose growing has been said to be relatively hard to do in the Houston/Galveston area, but such just isn't true. Anyone can successfully grow our National Flower --- "The Queen of Flowers" --- the rose. But the real secret to doing so with ease for us is learning the proper horticulture for growing them on the Gulf Coast. So let's mention the most important facets.

1. Plant roses in the sunniest spot in the yard. Roses aren't very efficient converters of solar energy, and should receive 6-8 hours of full sun per day. Less isn't good.
2. Raised beds are recommended. Most of our soils are black clay, which is not friable enough and therefore doesn't drain well. Raised beds inherently drain by gravity, and won't allow too much water to remain in the root zones of roses. Too much water excludes oxygen to the roots, and that is bad.
3. Choose No. 1 bushes. Cheap bushes are poor choices. The best ones are 3- to 5-gallon pots, and have been fed and kept free of diseases prior to your purchase.
4. Don't fertilize a newly planted bush until it has bloomed once in your flower bed. As a bush puts out new roots it is best to not have roots against fertilizer granules. After that first bloom, begin to give the bush required nutrients.
5. The most important tip is to KEEP THE LEAVES ON THE BUSH! Most dead bushes have been weakened by allowing disease to invade the bush. A new bush won't likely come to you with disease in it, so if it becomes diseased it is likely because of infections in neighboring bushes in your garden or across the fences. Usual diseases are *blackspot* and *mildew*, both of which are treatable. There are NO roses in today's market that won't contract a disease, if exposed to enough of it...NONE. A leaflet with a black dot is a doomed leaflet.
6. There are people to help you. Your Houston Rose Society has American Rose Society Consulting Rosarians who can give you free advice. And the monthly Rose-Ette newsletter is the best one in the nation. Membership cost is less than one rose bush, and can be paid for on-line at www.houstonrose.org.



7. Pruning is important. Bushes grow best when properly pruned. And using the right tools in the proper manner is key to success. Sharp bypass shears are the right choice, and there is much misinformation about when and where and how to cut stems for best flower production, so ask a Consulting Rosarian to show you how to do it.

8. Water is important. Too much cause the leaves to turn yellow and fall off. Too little causes the leaves to turn yellow and fall off.

Baxter Williams is an American Rose Society Master Rosarian, and has been growing roses in the Houston area since early 1967. His garden has approximately 500 bushes of all types. He currently serves as Programs VP of the Houston Rose Society, the nation's largest local rose society. Email Baxter at bxtwms@att.net.