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## Rose Winterization

Roses are one of our most recognized and beloved flowers. There are over a hundred species of roses and literally thousands of cultivars. Bred for fragrance, flower color, bloom time, size of flowers, double flowers, they exist in red, pink, yellow, white, peach, lavender and everything in between! There are many types of roses including miniature roses, groundcovers, floribundas, grandifloras, climbing roses, hybrid teas and shrub roses.

Rose Types:

Groundcover Roses are perfect for covering slopes or rocky areas. They are known for their carpets of colorful blooms, yet tend to be low-maintenance.

Grandiflora Roses are similar to Hybrid Teas in habit and size. They generally are tall plants, with blooms in clusters, rather than as one-per-stem. They are very popular as cut flowers.

The small flowers of Floribunda Roses look like elegant hybrid tea blooms, but appear in clusters instead of one flower per stem. Floribundas generally display hardiness, free flowering, and showy, usually fragrant blooms.

Climbing Roses hold their blossoms up high for all to see and enjoy. These grow on any garden structure and are sure to fill your space with a delightful fragrance.

Hybrid Tea Roses are THE signature Rose of the floral industry. They are long-stemmed and boast a flower that is rivaled by no other type of rose.

Lastly, Shrub Roses are perfect for formal or informal gardens. They display disease resistance and continuous blooming, making them a perfect choice for a carefree garden.



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## Choosing a Rose:

Rose winterization really begins with the proper selection of a variety of Rose. With some many types of Roses and colors to choose from, you really should be able to find a Rose that is suitable for our climate. To ensure the greatest chance of success, we recommend that you choose Roses that are hardy to at least USDA Zone 4. You may plant Roses hardy to USDA Zone 5 provided that you prepare them properly for the winter in Wisconsin.

## Rose Planting:

After choosing a variety of Rose that is suitable for our climate, the success or failure of your Rose depends upon the preparation of the planting area, planting depth and proper placement within the garden.

When planting your Roses, you want to add peat moss, activated compost and/or composted manure to your planting hole. Proper soil preparation prior to planting your Rose ensures **that your Rose's roots are placed into an environment that is advantageous for them to put down roots quickly.**

Roses are sometimes grafted, so that a hardy rootstock of one variety is grafted to the more desirable, flowering portion of another plant variety. When planting these types of Roses, this bud union, which is the area where the two plants were grafted onto one another, needs to be planted 1-2" **BELOW the soil line. This is critical to the survival of these types of Roses.** Many times when the bud union is left above the soil line, the top plant of the graft dies, but the lower plant, the rootstock survives. You **can recognize the bud union as a "bulged" area on the stem, near the soil line.**

In addition, you want to add 3 cups of Espoma Rose-tone to the soil at planting time and monthly during the summer until the end of August or 6 weeks before first frost date. **It's important to give your Roses** the proper nutrition they need as it helps to keep them disease and insect-free and promotes winter hardiness.

The more quickly your plant gets established after planting, the stronger it becomes and the less opportunity there is for it to be attacked by insects or disease. Having strong, healthy plants is the key to successfully wintering your Roses.

Proper placement of your Rose within your garden is also important. Roses benefit from being planted in areas where they are protected from the wind, especially a harsh, drying, winter wind, yet in a location with enough air circulation during the growing season, so that disease is not an issue. Since Roses can be prone to insect and disease problems, constant monitoring for issues and timely treatment as necessary is imperative.



## Fall Preparation/Hardening Off:

At the end of August it is important to stop feeding your Roses Espoma Rose-tone or any other nitrogen fertilizers. Nitrogen fertilizers promote growth of the stems, something that is undesirable going into winter. You should continue to water your plants as needed, as you will want your plants hydrated going into winter.

Approximately 3 weeks into September, you should stop spraying for diseases and **insects. You should also stop “deadheading” any flowers at this time.** Continue to water your plants as needed.

Around the third to fourth week of October, after we have had several frosts, but before the ground freezes, start the winterization process.

## Winterization:

Remove all leaves and debris from around the base of the plant and from within the branches of the plant. Do not compost these leaves and canes, as diseases and insects can over-winter in this debris.

The canes should be pruned according to the method of winterization you are using and the type of Roses you have.

### *Hilling with Soil:*

Use a sharp bi-pass pruner to prune the canes to **30-36”**. **This is simply to** get rid of long canes that can become ice-laden and wind-whipped and damaged. Cut out any dead canes at the base.

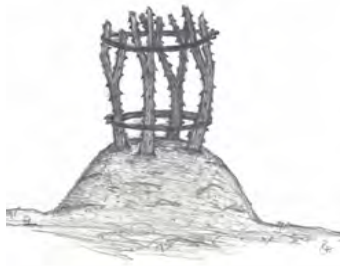
Pruning should occur at a node and just above an outward facing bud.

Tie the tips of the canes together with twine to prevent breakage.

Pile new soil or soil brought from another area of the garden around the base of the plant. Make sure to firm the soil around the plant. **Mound the soil 12” deep by 12” wide around the canes. Soil conducts heat, so this mound of soil** will conduct heat up into the stem. The soil will prevent temperature fluctuations and help insulate the Rose.

Around the second week of November, or when the soil freezes hard, add a layer of mulch. You can use bark mulch, leaves, straw or pine needles.





### *Hilling with Mulch:*

As opposed to soil, you can also do hilling with just mulch. It does not conduct heat as well as the soil, but it will still act as an insulator. If you are just using **mulch, make the mound at least 18:" high and wide.**

### *Winterizing Structures:*

If you plan to use a structure of some sort, you may want to prune your Roses to 12-18". **There are issues associated with this method for** a couple of reasons. One, it is advisable to prune as little as possible in the fall. Pruning leaves the plant exposed to disease and desiccation. Second, structures can be warm and cozy for critters in the winter. Rodents may take up residence in your structure and feed on your Rose. Also, because they can be warm, humidity can be a problem. This can breed fungus and disease.

If you choose to make a structure, you can make a cylinder of chicken wire or invert a tomato or peony cage and wrap the Rose in burlap.

Begin mounding soil over the crown of the plants using the Hilling methods above.

**Build and install the structure. There should be a 12" clearance around the** inside of the structure for the mulch. Make sure the structure is secured to the ground

Fill the structure with leaves, pine needles, straw or other loose and non-compacting material.



You can also purchase winterizing structures rather than building them. Cones and other structures are available to hold your insulating material. If you go this route, the cones made of foam are not recommended. During warm periods, they can heat up considerably, causing the Rose to break dormancy or breed disease.

### Winterizing Climbing Roses:

Climbing Roses can be winterized using several different methods.

#### *Hilling with soil:*

Remove the canes from their supports. Pull the canes away from the trellis or other support and lay them on the ground.

Spray the canes with dormant oil spray, which protects them from diseases in the soil. Always read and follow label directions. Coat the canes well and let dry.

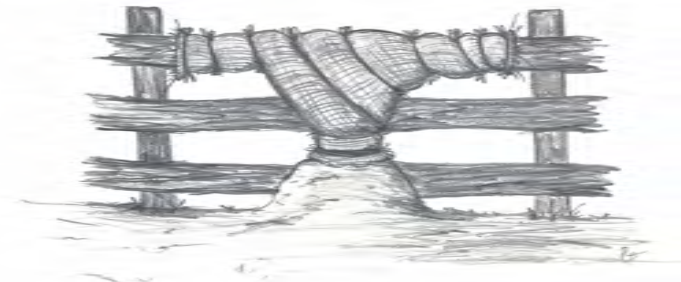
Pin the canes loosely, so that they remain flat.

Cover the canes with at least 2 inches of garden soil. After the ground freezes mulch the canes with straw or leaves.

When spring arrives, remove the canes and put them back on their supports.

#### *Bundle in Place:*

Climbing Roses can actually be bundled and tied and then wrapped with straw and burlap. Use the **“Hilling Method”** around the roots and crown.



*Minnesota Tip Method:*

Tie the canes together using synthetic twine that will not decay over winter. Leave a long piece of twine attached.

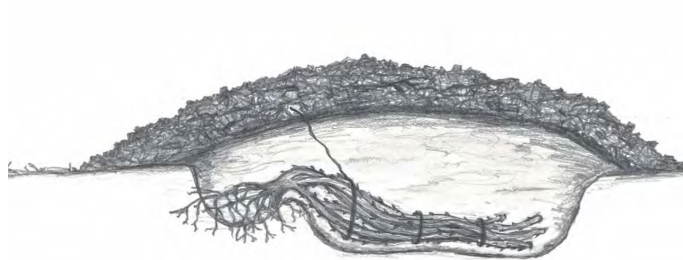
Spray the canes with dormant oil spray, which protects them from diseases in the soil. Always read and follow label directions. Coat the canes well and let dry.

Dig a trench on one side of the plant and loosen the soil around the roots using a garden fork to minimize root damage.

Use a garden fork to pry under the roots and carefully tip the plant over into the trench.

Cover the plant completely with the soil that was removed, being careful to leave the long piece of extra twine exposed above the dirt so it will be easier to find later.

Water the bed to help settle the soil and keep the canes and roots in good shape for the winter.



Removing the Winterization:

Around the third week of March or new growth begins to happen in the spring, remove the mulch and soil from around the plant. This should be after the ground thaws out and before the Rose has put on much growth. Some gardeners remove the mulch layer **and come back a week or two later and remove the soil. It's all weather/climate** related and requires you to be in tune with **what's going on in your garden. However,** if you follow these steps from planting to winter, you can enjoy the beauty of all the Roses we have to offer!

