

### Hints on growing beautiful roses

*Follow these tips for a great rose display*

**Aspect** Roses require full sun for a minimum of eight hours a day. They will flower in less light, however this can result in leggy growth and inferior quality blooms.

**Soil** Roses can be grown in a variety of soils with good results. It is often said that roses prefer clay soils. In fact, no plants like heavy clay, although roses will tolerate clay more than other plants. The addition of well-rotted organic matter, such as cow manure, composted leaves, and coarse river sand will lighten heavy soils. The addition of **Multicrop Ground Breaker** is recommended to allow water penetration through heavy soils. Good drainage is vital. Do not put fresh manures or chemical fertilizers near the roots when planting new roses, these can cause severe root burn.

**Mulching** Essential for both weed control, water retention and keeping the root zone cooler in summer. A combination of composted cow manure with shredded lucerne hay over the top is ideal (refer CedFacts sheet *What's so special about lucerne hay?*). Alternatively, use shredded pine mulch (**not** pine bark, pine chip or eucalypt chip). Wet the soil before applying any mulch. Keep all mulch 100mm away from the stems of plants to prevent collar rot.

**Fertilising** Roses with their extended flowering season require more regular feeding than most other plants. I recommended feeding roses every six weeks during the growing season (Sept-April). Apply a coffee mug full (250grams) of a proprietary granular rose food around the drip line of the rose, keeping back at least 100mm from the stem. Alternatively, use a liquid rose food such as Phostrogen, which is specifically recommended by The Royal National Rose Society. Always water the ground under roses before applying any fertiliser.

**Watering** A good deep soaking once a week is preferable to light watering every day. Light watering encourages surface roots that will quickly dry out in summer. Also, the rose will not be anchored to the ground and could blow over. Water round the base of the rose. If overhead watering cannot be avoided, do this early in the morning. Leaves that are remain wet overnight on warm summer nights can encourage Black Spot and mildew fungal diseases.

**Pests and Diseases** The main problems are aphids, Black Spot and mildew. There is no known cure for Black Spot, it can only be controlled by preventative spraying. *Triforine* is recommended by the Royal National Rose Society, spraying on a six-weekly cycle. This can be combined with *Pyrethrum* to control aphids. Caution needs to be taken, as not all chemicals can be mixed together. Alternatively, use *Confidor* for all sucking and chewing insects (this does not control Black Spot or mildew). *Triforine* and *Confidor* are systemic chemicals and are absorbed into all parts of the rose. Spray both under and on top of the leaves and on the ground under the rose. Always follow manufacturer's directions when using chemicals. Do not put diseased rose leaves on the compost heap. If replanting roses in the same position, it is vital to remove as much of the existing soil as possible and replace with new soil. This prevents the transfer of a soil condition known as 'rose sickness' to the new roses.

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