

## ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM/ LIMESTONE COUNTY OFFICE

### The Garden Spot For week of May 4, 2009

#### Growing Roses

Among the most meaningful Mother's Day gifts are those that Mom can enjoy for years. Many moms love to receive rose bushes, because this is the perfect time of year to establish them in the yard. Then, she can enjoy them for years.

There are more than 6,000 varieties of roses, offering a wide range of forms, colors, and fragrances from spring until late fall. Roses can be used in the landscape as single plants or in masses for impressive color display. Each year new varieties are introduced by plant breeders.

You can grow roses successfully with some thought and planning and a little regular care. Here are some key steps to start you off right:

- ✓ Select a planting site that receives a minimum of 6 hours of sunshine daily.
- ✓ Plant roses in a well-prepared bed of soil liberally mixed with organic matter (well-composted animal manure, peat moss, or decayed leaves).
- ✓ Water roses frequently, with an inch of water each week from rain or irrigation applied during the early morning hours.
- ✓ Remove flowers from the plant without damaging the remaining parts of the plant. Make clean cuts with sharp instruments.
- ✓ Prune the plants every year to keep them healthy and in good form.
- ✓ Regularly inspect plants to prevent insect or disease damage and treat as needed.
- ✓ Mulch plants to conserve soil moisture and suppress weeds.

Roses should be purchased from reputable sources. Local nurseries and garden centers are usually good sources of plants.

**Planting bare-root roses:** Remove the wrappings and place the roots in a bucket of warm water. Plants may be left in the water up to 24 hours prior to planting. Holes for the bare-root roses should be at least 12 inches deep and 18 inches in diameter. Mix two parts soil with one part humus (leaf or manure compost, peat moss, pine bark). Fertilizer and lime should be mixed into the bed according to soil test recommendations. Set plants in the hole on top of a mound made of the soil mix so that the bud union is just above ground level after the soil settles. Under no circumstances should the roots be twisted or forced into a ball in order to cram them into a small area. Place the soil around the roots, firming the soil by hand, and water the rose thoroughly.

If **potted roses** are to be planted, removed the container in such way to keep the soil ball intact. Dig a hole twice the diameter of the soil ball. The planting depth should be the same as for bare-root roses. Place soil from the rose bed in the hole around the soil ball. Immediately after planting, water thoroughly to firm the soil.

Controlling pests is a major challenge of growing roses. Insects, mites, and diseases can quickly make a beautiful plant unsightly. The number and quality of blooms will also be greatly reduced if pest control is not practiced. For information on controlling specific insects or diseases, refer to Extension publication ANR-0157 "Growing Roses"; which can be obtained at the Limestone County Extension Office or online at [www.ACES.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0157](http://www.ACES.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0157) .

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On another topic: County Extension Coordinator Betty Ann Broman will be testing pressure canner gauges at the Limestone County Co-Op (Hwy 31 South in Athens) this Friday, May 8 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. She will also be presenting five 20-minute 'mini' food preservation classes at the top of each hour. Classes planned include:

10 a.m.: Basics of Home Canning

11 a.m.: Freezing

Noon: Pickling

1 p.m. Canning (repeat)

2 p.m. Freezing (repeat)

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