



In the Garden: Growing Roses

This is the VOA Special English Agriculture Report.

Most kinds of rose plants are native to Asia. But roses also grow in other parts of the world including northwest Africa, Europe and the United States.

In nineteen eighty-six, Congress and President Ronald Reagan declared the rose as America's "national floral emblem." They proclaimed it the national flower, in other words. But whatever the name, the choice of the rose did not smell very sweet to supporters of other popular flowers.

Some say roses are difficult to grow. But you have a better chance of success if you start with a few suggestions from experts.

First, choose a place to plant your roses where they can get sunshine for about six hours on bright days.

You can buy roses from a garden center or by mail order. You can buy potted roses, also known as container roses, or bare-root plants. Each kind has its fans.

Some gardeners say potted roses are easier to plant. They say the roots develop better if you start with potted roses. But others point out that bare-root roses come without soil, so they weigh less to transport and that can save money.

The University of Illinois Extension advises getting bare-root roses as close to planting time as you can. If they arrive before you are ready to plant them, make sure the packing material is moist. Keep the plants in a cool, dark place.

You plant the roses while they are dormant. The resting plants have no leaves but still need water.

When growing roses, the soil should feel moist deep down. Watering should be done in the morning. You can avoid problems like black spot and mildew that way.

Be careful not to water roses too much. Too much water can cause unhealthy discoloration on the leaves. After heavy rains or too much watering, try temporarily pulling away mulch from around the roots. Doing that will help dry

the soil.

Placing mulch around rose plants is normally a good idea. Mulch suppresses weeds and holds moisture in the soil. You can use mulch made from bark, pine needles, cottonseed or oak leaves.

If the soil is very dry, you can add peat or compost to help condition it. If aphids, thrips or other insects invade your rose bushes, you may be able to force them off with just a strong spray of water.

And that's the VOA Special English Agriculture Report, written by Jerilyn Watson. Share your stories about growing roses at voaspecialenglish.com. I'm Karen Leggett.