

# COCKER'S ROSES

AWARD WINNING ROSES SINCE 1841



## Planting and Aftercare Guide

Roses are generally easy to care for if a few basic rules are observed and the correct care products administered. Below is our guide to planting and caring for your roses, which if followed should ensure that you have healthy and beautiful roses for years to come. Please remember that we want you to enjoy your roses so if you have any questions or problems, please do not hesitate to send us an email or give us a call as we are only too happy to help.

**On Arrival:** If you are unable to plant your roses as soon as they arrive, Cocker's packing will ensure that the plants will remain in good condition for at least 2 weeks provided that the parcel is kept in a frost free but cool and unheated shed. If planting is to be deferred longer than this, unpack the roses and heel them in, i.e. make a shallow trench and cover the roots with soil and firm down.

**Position in Garden:** Roses do best when given a bed to themselves in an open part of the garden. Most roses do not tolerate shade well. Roses should not be planted under trees or where they will be swamped by other plants or shrubs in the garden as this will stunt their growth and potentially kill the plant. Containers should be likewise placed in an open area.

**Ground Preparation and Planting:** Roses may be planted at any time between the end of October and late April when the weather is sufficiently fine and provided that the soil is friable and free from frost or snow. Soak the roots in a bucket of water for 10 – 15 minutes before planting. Roots should be pruned back to 20 - 25cm (8 – 10 in). Hybrid Tea and Floribunda varieties should be planted 45-60cm (18-24 in) apart, Patio varieties 37-45cm (15-18 in) apart, and Climbers and Shrubs approx 180cm (6 ft) apart. Prepare the soil with a top dressing of VITAX Q4 by scattering it over the surface then raking it through the soil. It must not touch the roots directly. Dig the hole wide enough to allow the roots of the rose to spread. Use a planting mixture consisting of a handful of BONEMEAL mixed through a gallon bucket of topsoil. A stronger concentration will burn the roots and damage the plant. Use a quarter of this mixture per rose in the bottom of the hole and place the rose in such a position that the roots are evenly spread. Wet rotted cattle manure can be used as an alternative, but do not use chicken, pig or horse manure or spent mushroom compost. We discourage use of peat as this is not a sustainable growing medium. The rose should be planted up to the base line i.e. where the branches grow from the stem of the plant. No part of the branches should be beneath the soil line. If planted too deep, the branches will rot and the plant will die. Cover the roots with the soil and tread down firmly down. Do not surround plant with bark or slate or other material as this prevents the roots from breathing. For exceptionally healthy growth, especially in poor soil, ROOTGROW (a mycorrhizal fungi that creates a secondary root system) is highly recommended. Other than as recommended by us, no fertiliser any kind should be used as this will kill the plant. Most commercially available compost mixtures (including some which claim to be suitable for "Trees, Shrubs and Roses") contain fertiliser which will damage and most likely kill the plant. Home made compost is also unsuitable due to any chemicals which may have been sprayed on weeds, grass etc. which make up the compost mixture. Kindly note that our 12 month replacement guarantee does not apply in the event that plants have been damaged by fertiliser or otherwise unsuitable planted.

**Planting Roses in Old Rose Beds:** If new roses are planted in old beds it is essential to dig out a hole at least 45cm (18 in) deep and 45cm (18 in) square and re-fill it with fresh topsoil in which roses have not previously been grown. The old roses will have significantly depleted the nutrient content of the old soil and the new roses will not grow unless the soil is replaced. Do not use commercially available compost as these will contain fertiliser which will kill the plants. Prepare the soil with VITAX Q4 and plant as above with BONEMEAL and ROOTGROW.

**Feeding:** A dressing of TOPROSE ROSE FOOD immediately after pruning in March at the rate of 125g per square metre is highly recommended with subsequent feedings at the rate of 125g per square metre, once a month until the end of June, but never after the flowering period has commenced as over feeding discourages flowering. BONEMEAL can be used for a winter feed by scattering a handful around the plant (but not actually touching it) and lightly raking it in. This will promote strong and healthy roots. Never use potato manure, Growmore or other commercial feeding products as these are unsuitable for roses.

**First Pruning:** All Hybrid Tea, Floribunda and Patio varieties (including Hybrid Tea and Floribunda Full Standard and Half Standard Roses) should be pruned early to mid March after planting, or where roses are planted after March, immediately after planting. Cut the stems back to (4-6 in) from the base, with the top eyes pointing outwards. Climbing and Rambling varieties should be lightly clipped and any dead wood removed the first year after planting. Shrub varieties should be clipped to remove dead wood and trimmed to shape. Always prune using sharp secateurs which create a clean cut. Never use

scissors, hedge trimmers or other blunt cutting instruments as these will leave a ragged cut which exposes the plant to frost damage.

**Pruning in Subsequent Years:** All Hybrid Tea, Floribunda and Patio varieties (including Hybrid Tea and Floribunda Full Standard and Half Standard Roses) should be pruned early to mid March. All week shoots should be cut away and healthy growth cut back to 15 – 20cm (6-8 in) from the base. Keep the centre of the bush open with the top eyes pointing outwards to maintain the shape of the plant. Climbing and Rambling varieties are pruned in one of three ways. Please refer to your catalogue or the tag on the plant for the pruning group for each particular variety. Varieties in pruning group 1 produce less growth from the base and generally new growth is off older wood higher up the stems. Older wood should be pruned back to a new leading shoot. The leading shoot should be left at full length and the shorter shoots cut back to 4 -7cm (2-3 in). Climbers and Ramblers in prune group 2 should not have any new growth pruned unless damaged or if it is necessary to keep them within an allotted space. Old wood should be cut out and the laterals cut back to 10 – 15 cm (4-6 in). Those in pruning group 3 need only to be pruned to cut out dead wood and keep the plant in shape. Weeping Standard Roses should be pruned as per Climbing and Rambling roses. Shrub varieties should be clipped to remove dead wood and trimmed to shape. In all varieties, suckers (being a shoot growing from the root stock of the plant at the base) should be removed as these jeopardise the health of the rest of the plant.

**Suckers:** All roses are grown by way of growing a root stock which forms the main stem of the plant and then the buds of different varieties are grafted onto this stem. If your plant throws blooms in a different colour to the grafted variety, these are suckers that are growing from the main stem, as opposed to from the grafts that are grafted onto the main stem. The branches of the suckers must be traced back to the main stem and pulled off as close to the main stem as possible. Do not cut them as this will encourage them to grow. This should be done as soon as possible as left untreated suckers can consume a plant. Be careful not to pull off the grafts in error. If the problem is severe, the plant may look a bit unbalanced until it has had time to recover, but after it has been pruned back the following year it should be fine.

**Wind-Rock:** To prevent your roses being damaged by wind over the winter months, cut them down to half height in December. In a bed of mixed varieties, cut them all to the same height. If any stems are broken by wind rock, there is no option other than to cut them off cleanly below the break. If roots are exposed, cover with topsoil and tread down firmly.

**Frost Damage:** Frost damage is a major cause of death of roses if not properly contained. Frost damage appears as a two tone discolouring at the tips of the branches. Left untreated, frost damage will spread to the base of the plant and death is inevitable. Cut back as soon as frost damage has been identified to the next live outward pointing eye. Even if the branches are trimmed right back to the base, so long as a live eye remains the plant should survive. Kindly note that our 12 month replacement guarantee does not apply in the event that roses have died due to frost damage not being properly treated.

**Dead- Heading:** During the summer months after your first blooms have flowered and are looking withered it is advisable to remove the old blooms from the plant by cutting them just above a leaf. Dead-heading encourages new blooms to flower and prevents the old blooms seeding, therefore prolonging the flowering stage of the plant through to Autumn. Where planting for decorative

**Pests and Diseases:** The most common rose diseases are:- Blackspot which is caused by warm wet weather during the summer months and can be identified by black spots with a yellow fringe appearing on the leaves; Rust caused by cool temperatures and high moisture levels which first appears as small rusty coloured spots on the undersides of leaves; Powdery Mildew which appears as a white powdery residue on the leaves and is caused by incorrect feeding, dryness at the roots and hot days followed by cold nights; Downy Mildew caused by moist cloudy conditions and appears as a black and purple mottled discolouration of the leaves; Greenfly and other Aphids (small insects) which feed on young shoots; and Animals which feed on the whole plant. To prevent disease, we recommend fortnightly treatment with SYSTHANE FUNGUS FIGHTER. Ideally, treatments should be alternated with UNCLE TOM'S ROSE TONIC which contains different chemicals and helps to prevent the plant building up immunity to the treatment. In the event of an attack by disease, treat as above and use SULPHUR ROSE to aid recovery. Greenfly and other insect attacks should be treated with PROVADO ULTIMATE BUG KILLER. Animals can be prevented from eating plants with four weekly treatments of GRAZERS which is a nutrient based non toxic spray that makes the plants inedible to rabbits, deer, pigeons and geese whilst being safe for pets, wildlife and the environment. Please also be exceptionally careful if spraying weeds around your roses as roses are extremely susceptible to spray damage. If the plant survives, spray damage presents as small withered growth and there is no solution other than to replace the plants. As roses can also be contaminated beneath the soil level, we recommend hand weeding only.