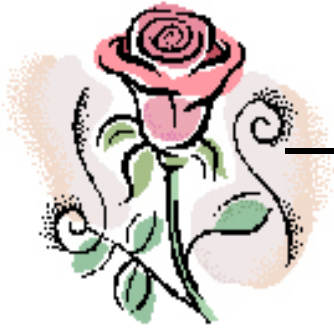


# Roses: the Spring Season



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## Ready, Set, Go!!

### Spring Rose Tips:

- \* Finger prune those little buds that are growing in the wrong direction – push them off with your finger!
- \* Once the rose is growing well it needs food – fertilizer should have a slightly higher nitrogen percentage. 20-20-20 or something along that line will work well.
- \* Organics are used to feed the ‘critters’ in the soil. They in turn manufacture the necessary solutions that feed your roses.
- \* Mulch to retain moisture in the soil.
- \* Spray for mildew and rust once the leaves are 2" long. Use horticultural oils or fungicides that will help your rose fight off fungus infections.
- \* Rejoice in your roses – give bouquets away! Make someone happy.

Spring – the time of rebirth and new beginnings. Winter is past and the roses are putting out new growth.

Many roses have deep red and burgundy pigments in their new canes and leaves. Don't be startled to find your roses covered with purple foliage for a few weeks. Once new chloroplasts are made in the leaves, their green color will mask this reddish tint and the leaves will develop their normal dark green or medium green coloration.

Spring is a good time to ‘tune up’ your pruning job. Did you leave a stem a bit too long and there is no new growth for several inches? Trim it down to the active bud now and you won't get ugly ‘die back’ in the cane tip. Maybe one side of the rose is higher than the other? Now is the time to trim down the top to make a gently rounded shape.

In our California climate, we often have cool fog in the spring, and the rains may come back over and over - making the garden soggy and the atmosphere very moist. It is a good idea to stay OUT of the flower beds when they are wet. Stepping on the ground will compact it and make it harder for the roots of the roses to ‘breathe’.

Cool, moist weather is also the perfect climate for mildews. Powdery mildew will attack roses (and many other plants) once the rains have stopped - powdery mildew does not like continually wet foliage. You can minimize any chance of infection by making sure your roses have good ventilation all around each bush. Don't plant a rose flat up against a wall or fence - there is no air circulation at the back when you do this and mildews get in and infect the blooms.

Once the weather is warm and clear you can start checking your roses to see if the new canes are growing in the right direction. Don't let a new bud get started in the wrong direction! If a bud is starting to grow towards the inside of the bush, or towards the driveway, or anywhere but out towards the edges of the bush, simply reach over and flick it off with a snap of your finger, or push it off with your thumb. The little scar will heal in a few days and no damage is done.

Aphids will soon find your garden – they are only waiting for warm weather and the juicy tips of growing plants to appear. These nuisances can be hosed off with a jet of water

each morning. Once they hit the ground, the black ground beetles get them!

You might want to start thinking about a routine for feeding your roses. They are starting to grow right now and they are using the food stored in their roots until their leaves develop enough chloroplasts to start photosynthesizing carbohydrates. Once that starts, the roses will be very hungry.

A nice meal of any kind of fertilizer that has approximately a 28-20-20 rating would be appreciated (follow directions on the label). Remember - spread some organics on the surface and water them in. They become ‘comfort food’ as they disintegrate.

Finger pruning



## Stop – and Smell the Roses