

Rose Calendar

A Guide to Better Roses in the Santa Fe,
Los Alamos, and Espanola Areas



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January – Snow and sub-freezing temperatures are likely, so there's little to do this month. Check roses on supports to ensure they're held firmly. Water every other week if the weather is clear and dry, pay special attention to roses on southern exposures. If frost heaving has loosened roses (especially miniatures), firm the soil around them. Check catalogs and order your plants for spring planting, specifying they not be sent prior to April.

February – Exposed roses will almost surely still be in frozen soil. Those in southern exposures will likely require periodic watering. This is a dangerous month for freeze-thaw cycles and there is little one can do to prevent injury to plants. Examine winter protection for storm damage, and make repairs where necessary. Consider an order of bareroot plants.

March – Spring planting can be started if the ground is free of frost, though April is better for planting dormant, bareroot roses. Although roses may show spring growth, do not prune yet. Keep all roses moist and leave mulches and winter coverings intact. Now is the time to prepare soil for new rose beds.

April – Apply a dormant spray on a warm day. Gradually remove winter protection and begin a regular watering program. Plant bareroot roses. Begin pruning after April 15, being sure to seal cuts on canes to prevent disease and insect entry. Visit nurseries and request a list of containerized roses they will be carrying. Try to transplant while plants are still semi-dormant.

May – Spring pruning should be completed and waste discarded. Begin your fertilizer program, applying fertilizer to moist soil and watering in. Depending on rainfall and soil, you may need to water 2 to 3 times each week. Tie up and train new growth on climbers. Water down mounds around bareroot plantings which should now be showing growth. Plant containerized roses. Be sure to harden off nursery plants by gradual exposure to your local climate. Young nursery plants need frequent watering, check them daily.



June – Continue with fertilization and watering programs. Begin your pest control program, keeping alert for attracts of thrips, spider mites and caterpillars. Roses are in full growth and should be showing buds this month. Disbud the auxiliary blossoms from hybrid teas and others to produce top-quality blooms for show. Visit public rose gardens or flower shops to expand your knowledge of varieties. Select and plant additional containerized roses if you desire.

July – All specimens have either flowered or are in full bloom. Remove flower stalks after the bloom fades by cutting back just above a five-leaflet leaf. Continue with fertilization and pest control strategies, keeping an eye out for powdery mildew. Maintain your mulch, as it may be wearing thin. Again, bareroots may be planted. Prune out any canes which show signs of disease, being sure to clean your shears with alcohol between cuts.

August – Cease applications of fertilizer so roses can slow down before fall. Continue disbudding and removing spent blooms. Watering and pest control should continue as before. Watch for sales as nurseries try to deplete their stock. It's a great time to plant potted roses at bargain prices!

September – Roses are still flowering freely, so stick by your watering and pest control programs. Apply a dressing of super phosphate and incorporate into the soil as preparation for winter. Order plants and prepare beds for November planting. Attend or compete in flower show at the New Mexico State Fair. This is the last month to plant potted roses. Transplant and roses you'd like to move.

October – Tidy up your beds. This is a good month for evaluating roses to determine which might need replacement. Fewer active pests should give you a break from your pest control program. Continue watering as needed.

November – Prepare your roses for winter. In exposed areas long stems should be pruned a little to prevent wind rocking in storms. Secure the canes of climbers to their lattices. Mound over the crown area with soil, pine needles, leaves or other insulation. Proceed with your fall planting, being sure they are well-mounded. It may still be necessary to water periodically.

December – The soil may be frozen solid in some areas. There's little outdoor work now. Watering may be necessary depending on the weather. Peruse your new catalogs and select new varieties. Order early, as some popular selections may sell out. Ask that your order be reserved for the shipping time you have specified.