



Winter Protection of Roses

Winter protection is often necessary for most types of garden roses. The extent of protection depends on the type of rose and its location in the garden.

Heavy fall pruning of bush roses could mean loss of the entire plant in the event of a severe winter. Experience is a good indicator of how much winter-kill to expect to find in the spring. By leaving 18"-24" of healthy canes under mulch you can be fairly sure to have new growth and healthy canes in the spring. However, it is advisable to cut extremely long stems back to prevent their whipping about in winter winds and perhaps loosening the soil mound around the rose crown. A good rule for tea roses is to cut less in the fall and more heavily in the spring.

After the first hard frost of late fall you can use any of the following procedures for protecting *hybrid tea* and *floribunda* roses:

Mounding Soil

- Prune vigorous long canes which may be whipped around by the wind. Take care to make pruning cuts 1/4" above an outward pointing bud so that new growth will be started in the right direction.
- Tie the canes together with twine.
- Mound soil around the base of the plant to a height of 10-12". Bring in additional soil; don't rake it up from the base.

Tarpaper or Wire Mesh Collars

- Prune only to adjust the size of the plant to its winter covering.
- Tie the canes together with twine.
- Make a collar from heavy tarpaper or hardware cloth purchased at a hardware store and fasten edges together to form a cylinder.
- Place the collar over the plant and fill it with a mulching material such as peat moss, pine bark, or straw.
- When the collar is filled, tie pieces of burlap over the top to keep the mulch in place.
- Mound soil to a depth of 10"-12" around the base of the collar.

Wrapping

- No pruning is necessary, other than to remove canes rubbing together and those growing inward toward the center of the bush.
- Tie the canes together with twine.
- Bind with evergreen boughs and burlap.
- Mound soil to a depth of 6"-8" around the base.

Climbing roses should be pruned in midsummer after the plants have stopped blooming and all the blooms have faded. Prune all the flowering canes close to the roots so that new growth will harden off by winter. Climbing roses will still need protection from winter injury. Depending on where the roses are located, either of the following procedures can be used.

Wrapping

If your roses are growing in a fairly protected area out of harsh winds and extreme temperatures, wrapping with burlap or evergreen boughs will give sufficient winter protection.

- After the first hard frost of the fall, secure canes to their support and prune off long ends.
- Next wrap the canes in burlap, straw, or evergreen boughs and tie with twine.
- Mound 10"-12" of soil around the base of the plant.

Mounding Soil

In extremely cold areas or open areas where winter damage is common, the best way to protect a climbing rose is to shield the entire plant with earth.

- After the first hard frost of the fall, detach the plant from its support and tie its canes together.
- Bend the canes to the ground arching them near the plant's base to avoid breaking.
- Pin the canes down with crossed stakes to heel in canes.
- Mound the soil over the entire plant and drive a stake into the ground at each corner of the mound to mark the spot.

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