

Magic Garden Roses



Welcome to our 8th newsletter. Certainly this one has been a bit overdue, as we have had our work cut out for us, through the toughest season that we can recall. The main thing we look at through such times as extreme drought is to get something positive out of it. One positive thing that it has taught us all, is just how important water is and that we should all have water saving plan in place. I personally think that we should all be rewarded for efforts made in cutting our water usage. It certainly has made us all much wiser in the ways in which we use water in the home and outside in the garden. I will be interested in seeing how water storage levels will look once our normal rainfalls are back again and all of us still keeping our water saving plans in place. So much more information



has come out about how to keep your gardens alive and which plants to choose in times of tough drought. Certainly this year roses have proven themselves once again as one of the best!



Talking to people everyday at the nursery here has raised some interesting points on what is the best preparation to put in place before planting out your bare rooted roses in winter. Choosing the right soil is the key point in getting a good drought tolerant garden started. This only applies if you really need to bring more soil into an area which lacks good top soil. It is really very simple. Get top soil that is not sandy loam mix. Really, the more sand in a

mix, the worse it is. The best soil is straight mountain soil with no additives. Years ago, that's all you could buy, over the time supplies have introduced sand and pine bark into soil to expand stock and cut costs. Using a straight mountain soil will retain moisture much better than a sandy loam mix.



I see to many people going to far too much effort and completely digging out what they believe to be 'bad' clay soil and dumping in a sandy loam mix, then wonder why plants die or do very poorly. When this is done, the water just sits at the bottom, the clay acts like a dam not letting go of water yet still looking dry at the top. Being so wet at the bottom simply rots the roots out. Most people that put very little effort into preparation actually get far better results. We have to remember that roses are tough and don't need TLC at time of planting. I see programs on TV with people making a massive hole, dumping in a bag of rotted compost and manure, staking it then spreading the roots evenly over a cute little mound

- none of that is necessary at all! For starters, rule number one is no fertiliser or compost around roots. This is the biggest problem causing losses of bare rooted roses. It keeps too much water around roots and the roots don't spread. Just plant them straight into the soil and top dress with a good organic fertiliser, then water it in and walk away. This procedure should not take longer than 30 seconds per rose, once area is ready. You should not have to water again until the hotter weather and soil starts to dry out.

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Towards the end of the season black spot, downy mildew and leaf yellowing may appear this is normal and does not require spraying.



In winter or early spring - DON'T WATER! So long as soil is damp, it will be perfect. It is very easy to tell if it's damp - just scratch the surface.

Just a final note on this subject, roses grow well in harder soils so most likely, the soil you have will be perfect. Don't be pressured by anybody into changing your soil. Send us a sample if you are really unsure. Many customers who have ordered roses have sent us a small sample and saved themselves a lot of hard work and extra dollars. Our advice is always aimed at keeping it simple, doing right the first time and getting top results.

Pruning existing roses in the garden has been a common subject of interest amongst our customers. We strongly advise not to prune too early. For years June had been the key time to prune but the climate has changed across Australia. We still had our gardens here in full flower in May! Not saying that the roses in the garden were looking



in pristine condition but it still shows that roses had full sapflow are certainly were not ready for their annual cut back. We actually do it early August and get great results, as we don't have them re-shooting to early. That way we don't get any frost burn on soft sappy shoots during the frost danger period. I have seen too often what happens when pruning is done too early and frost attacks soft shoots. It is not a pretty sight and a very heavy late frost can even kill a rose in extreme cases. Pruning a bit later is safer as the plant will have no water running through it so it simply cannot freeze. I wouldn't normally put to much emphasis on this subject but we have a lot of customers in country areas that and I know they have been hit with extreme frosts with temperatures around minus 6 degrees and I just wanted to make people aware. In Europe people put buckets over there roses after pruning when the snow sets in and never have losses. It shows how tough they are as long as you know how to prepare them for worst case scenarios.

That leads me to the end of our 8th newsletter. We will go into more detail regarding pruning in Newsletter number 9 which will be sent in late July. Just a quick note for customers that have ordered roses - we will have our bare rooted stock available in July this year as our propagation fields were still out in full flower late in May. We only started digging on June 4th and it takes around 4 weeks (weather permitting) to complete the orders. If anybody needs their roses earlier we will hand dig orders by special request.

Thank you from all of us here at Magic Garden Roses.

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