

Classy roses without the fuss

Here's the latest on roses that can give your clients lots of color and interest without a lot of fuss and bother.

By REBECCA REMBERT

To many landscapers, the word 'rose' induces visions of disease-ridden, cold-damaged, insect-riddled plants. But, like many groups of plants, there are both high-maintenance and minimal-maintenance varieties.

The most commonly available roses belong to the class of Hybrid Tea or Floribunda which are notorious in most parts of North America for being labor-intensive, fussy plants. For those who would like to grow roses but who are unable or unwilling to devote the time and effort necessary to tend a Hybrid Tea rose, many shrub roses offer an alternative. There are certain shrub

roses and climbers which are highly disease-resistant and cold hardy, and they deserve to be considered as an option for landscape situations where a fragrant, colorful, tough shrub is desired.

After a harsh winter, it's certainly disheartening to look at the black canes of a not-so-hardy rose bush. Avoid this by planting cold-tolerant varieties and by installing roses properly. Some roses come as grafted plants, and, unlike most grafted plants, the graft should be buried 1-2 inches below the soil surface in areas where the minimum winter temperature dips below 0°F. Fortunately, many of the cold-tolerant varieties are available as own-root plants, and they do not require the deep planting of their grafted counterparts. The planting hole should be 18-24 inches deep and the soil amended with compost or leaf mold if the drainage is slow. Provide adequate drainage to over-winter roses in harsh climates.

The Rugosa roses embody the qualities of cold-hardiness, disease-resistance and pest-resistance. They require minimal care, and with many varieties comes the added bonus of good rose hip display in the fall. In areas where Japanese beetles can wreak havoc on a summer garden, the Rugosas and many other shrub roses flower most heavily before the adult beetles start feeding. Since most shrub and Rugosa roses are repeat bloomers, only those flowers produced from



Dortmund thrives under difficult growing conditions. Foliage is disease resistant.



New Dawn: famous climber is very fragrant and hardy.

early July to early September are sacrificed. This amounts to very little bloom loss since the heaviest flower crops are produced in May, June and September.

In general, the shrub roses require the same care as any other flowering shrub. They benefit from fertile soil but will flower well in average garden soil. Spraying for pests and disease can be nearly eliminated if resistant varieties are chosen, and pruning can be accomplished in the spring with very little cleanup required later in the season. To maintain the desired dimensions of any shrub rose, reduce the largest

canes by one-third of their height in spring, just before or slightly after they break dormancy. For repeat-flowering climbers, allow them to reach the maximum desired size before pruning. Thereafter, trim off only the dead tips and reduce the laterals (small branches coming off the main canes) to 3-5 buds per stem (reducing the laterals will promote larger blossoms). Pruning may be kept to a minimum and only done when parts are overgrowing.

Listed below is a selection of cold-hardy, disease-resistant rose varieties that will grow and flower well in full sun or partial shade:

Ballerina. This hybrid musk will grow to 4'H x 4'W and produces large clusters of single, apple blossom-like blooms all summer. Even though the blossoms have no scent, Ballerina will produce a good crop of rose-hips if the flowers are not deadheaded.

Blanc Double de Coubert. A beautiful Hybrid Rugosa which produces large, double, pure white flowers with a strong clove fragrance. It will grow to 5'H x 4'W and flowers heavily in early summer with a good repeat bloom in the fall. A very hardy and disease-resistant rose.

Dortmund. This is a hardy climber that can also be grown as a large shrub. It produces clusters of bright cherry-red, single blossoms with white centers on a plant that will grow to 10'H x 6'W. The flowers have a nice scent and are produced off and on all summer if the earliest crop is deadheaded. Foliage is very shiny and disease-resistant.

Frau Dagmar Har-topp. A hybrid Rugosa shrub with papery, single flowers that appear in abundance in late spring to early summer, followed by a good repeat bloom until fall. The

flowers are very fragrant and are produced on a compact shrub of 3'H x 3'W with abundant rose hips in the fall.

Hansa. This is one of the hardiest Rugosa hybrids, producing strongly fragrant, purplish-red, double flowers in great profusion in early summer with a lighter repeat until fall and a great rose hip display late in the season. Will grow to be 5'H x 5'W.

John Cabot. A hardy climber developed in Canada that produces double, lightly fragrant, purplish-pink blooms in early summer with a lighter repeat until fall. It is disease-resistant and can be used as a pillar rose or on a wall. It will grow to be 6-10'H x 6'W.

New Dawn. This is perhaps the most famous climbing rose of all time. Its light pink, very fragrant, double blossoms appear in profusion in early summer and repeat well into fall. This tough hardy



Ballerina produces large clusters of single, apple blossom-like blooms.

climber needs room as it will grow to be 10-20'H x 10'W.

Pierette Pavement. The pavement series of roses offers tough, hardy shrubs that stay compact and require very little maintenance. This selection produces double, spicy-scented, reddish-pink blooms off and on all summer on a 2.5'H x 3'W shrub.

Sea Foam. This is a reliable, ground cover-type rose with small, healthy foliage. It carries an abundance of sweetly scented, double, white blossoms all summer on a 2'H x 3-5'W plant.

Thérèse Bugnet. Very fragrant, large double flowers are produced in great quantity on this variety in early summer with a lighter repeat in the fall. This hardy shrub sports colorful maroon-red stems in winter and grows to 6'H x 6'W. **LM**

The author is retail manager at Art Form Nurseries, Chagrin Falls, Ohio. She formerly owned a nursery specializing in hardy roses.



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