

• *What is an Antique Rose?*

An Antique Rose is generally considered to be a rose that was introduced before 1867, when modern Hybrid Tea Roses were first introduced. Most Old Garden Rose collectors embrace any rose that is more than seventy-five years old or display characteristics of the Antique Rose. Some of those characteristics would include the wonderful fragrance that these roses offer, their ease of cultivation, and the beauty that they lend to the landscape. Many modern hybrids lack the great perfume scent that Antique Roses carry. Also, Antique Roses often make great specimen plants, holding their own in the landscape with little care. Antique Roses are known to have attractive, healthy foliage with little incident of disease throughout the year. The flowers of Antique Roses are more muted or subtle in color than those of most modern roses. We like to think that if they were an attractive woman they would flirt subtly, leaving more to your imagination, where a modern rose lays it on thick with their showy, rich colors. Should one choose to "get to know" an Old Rose better they would find that they have a lot to offer.

• *Selecting an Antique Rose*

The hardest part of growing Antique Roses is the decision of which ones to select for your garden. Your first priority is to determine the USDA hardiness zone that you live in before making this decision. In the south those most well-suited are Chinas, Bermuda Mystery Roses, Noisettes, Polyanthas and Early Hybrid Teas. The next detail for selection would be size. Many of the old roses grow to be quite large so narrowing down a selection for a specific area can be a thought provoking decision. No doubt, enthusiasts are drawn to them by their beauty and ease of cultivation, but their historic background is just as interesting. Because of their beauty, fragrance and form they have been indispensable in gardens for centuries. Whether you chose a bush, rambler, climber or a smaller specimen you are sure to enjoy your Old Garden Rose.

• *Growing Antique Roses*

Modern rose rustlers attest to the constitution of Antique Roses by "rustling" up roses on old homesteads and in cemeteries that have been all but forgotten. Although they will withstand neglect, they will flourish if planted and maintained properly. Locate your Antique Rose in a sunny location that will receive six hours or more of direct sunlight each day. If you have to choose between morning or afternoon sun, choose the morning location. There are shade tolerant varieties, however even they require at least four hours of sunlight daily. Keep in mind that shade tolerant does not indicate shade preferred, roses grow larger faster and bloom more profusely when in a sunny location.

Begin by enriching your soil with organic material such as humus, peat or composted manure. Never plant your Old Garden Rose in a mix entirely of these products. A good ratio is 3 parts of garden soil to 1 part organic material thoroughly mixed into the planting area. This will continue to insure proper drainage, which is essential to good root development. Pay close attention that the bottom of the hole does not allow for air pockets by being concave or convex in design, a flat bottom is best. Air pockets afford burrowing insects a home and may "hollow out" even more during periods of drought, causing problems or even death to the rose. Of course, roses can be maintained in large pots if you desire. When planting them in containers select a pot initially twice as large as the root ball and fill it with a premium, well draining, potting mix.

Mulch around the base of your roses to insulate the roots from the extreme temperatures of summer and winter. Several inches of mulch applied twice annually will help to eliminate weeds, water stress and heat or cold stress. Once established your Antique Rose will prove very drought tolerant. However, when establishing your roses please water them deeply several times a week. After the first couple weeks you may water them deeply every five to seven days or as the weather dictates. Of course, it is always best to water during the morning hours.

One of the attributes of Antique Roses is their disease resistance. This does not mean that they are completely disease free. During the fall and early spring, when we are experiencing heavy fog, old roses may be affected by black spot and/or powdery mildew. They rarely become completely debilitated by disease. They usually shed any infected leaves and continue to grow. Should you choose to spray to keep all disease in check we suggest using wettable-sulphur or baking soda at the rate of 1 ounce of sulphur or baking soda to 1 gallon of water in a hose end sprayer applied in the early morning. Neem oil products have proven themselves to be very effective in retarding black spot and repelling insect pests. Please pay close attention to label instructions when using oil based products, such as neem oil, as they may burn the rose if applied improperly.

Another way to keep Old Garden Roses healthy and productive is by feeding and pruning them. There are many commercial rose fertilizers to choose from on the market today. Many fertilizers are systemic and help to repel insects while nourishing your rose. Products enhanced with systemic insect and disease control are not advisable for use in container plantings. Always follow package guidelines for fertilizer application rates. Pruning is the key to a nicely shaped and vigorous rose bush. During early spring, usually mid to late February in the Southeast, prune back approximately 1/3 of your rose bush. Throughout the growing season roses will benefit from the removal of spent blossoms. This process encourages more

blooming and foliage growth. Fall, being late September in the South, marks the time for another good pruning. Again, removing a considerable amount in the fall will encourage prolific spring growth and blossoms.

Antique Roses are so very rewarding and sure to delight anyone that chooses to include them in their landscape.

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