

Planting Procedure

The planting procedure will determine the future of your roses. Preparation of soil, size of hole and extent of aftercare depend very much on a range of factors: on the existing condition of the ground, the nature of the terrain and the prevailing climatic and weather conditions.

Best conditions for root development is in deeply aerated soil. With complimentary additives virtually any soil can be improved. Planting roses in individual holes restricts root development; comparable to growing in pots. Only for roses to be grown as specimen bushes, shrubs or climbers are individual holes (1m wide x 60cm deep) to be dug. For rose beds the whole area should be prepared and for rows of roses trenches need to be dug.

Soil Preparation

- Demarcate the border of the bed or trench.
- Dig up and shovel the top 40cm to the sides of the bed.
- Loosen the now bared subsoil by another 20 to 30cm depth. Stones to about fist size with surrounding soil assure permanent aeration.
- Waterholding subsoil is unsuitable for rose growing UNLESS a drain pipe can be installed on sloping ground or create a raised bed about 50cm higher than the surrounding lawn or pathway.
- For sticky clay or turf add gravel, coarse sand, clinker ash, peach pips, nut shells, perlite or crushed styrofoam as well as liberal quantities of organic material such as coarse compost, pine bark mulch or chips. coir (coconut fibre) and best of all peanut shells. Mix well.
- For very sandy soil liberal water retaining organic material such as peat moss, coir (coconut) fibre, peanut shells or compost is dug in. A mat of rock-wool or other heat insulation material i.e. "think pink", thick news papers may be spread out over the loosened sandy subsoil in order to trap and retain drain water.
- A similar decision is made to create a relative permanent good aeration of the soil that was shovelled to the side and needs to be filled back into the bed enriched with nutritious material. Any of the above maybe used as well as compost and matured manure. For accuracy it is best to shovel about half of the excavated top soil back and spread out evenly over the prepared subsoil. Add a 5 to 10 cm layer of the available or decided on additives, sprinkle

a handful of superphosphate or two hands full of bone meal per square metre and proceed to dig it over and get it mixed. Proceed by spreading the balance of the top soil over the prepared soil, again adding 5 to 10cm additives and superphosphate / bone meal and dig over. By now the surface of the prepared bed should be about 30 cm higher than the surrounding level. A spongy effect should be evident when stepping on it.

- In many gardens one encounters only about 0.30 m good sandy soil with a meter thick layer of dense clay or turf. It makes no sense in digging and excavating deep into it, creating a mini swimming pool in the process. Rather enrich to upper good 0.30 cm with additives as explained and then bring in more top soil and additives, raising the level to about 0.50 m above the level of lawn or paving. To prevent the edges from being washed out a wall can be built with stones, bricks, wooden planks or poles or planted up with ground hugging low growing plants such as the Australian violet, wild or edible strawberries, Periwinkle - the list is long.

Compacted Soil

Compacted soil locks up many important nutrients and it requires humus (described as "organic constituent of the soil formed by the decomposition of plant material) to "unlock" such nutrients.

Raised Beds

The raised level of the soil of the rose bed or individual hole is most important. It allows superb aeration and prevents standing water in the level where the roots are most active. In time with the decomposition of the large quantities of plant material (compost) the level will drop, but not to a detrimental sunken bed.

Sandy Soil

When it is found that the soil is too sandy, as is often the case near the sea, and without large quantities of water holding material being available it is best to sink large plastic pots, even half 100 or 200 litre plastic drums with holes cut into the bottom into the sand and to plant the rose bush with potting soil into the pots. The same applies to positions when encountering dense roots from nearby trees or climbers when digging holes or beds. Such tree roots would quickly

throw an even denser root net above the roots of the newly planted roses not giving them a chance to develop. Again, planting the roses in big pots sunk into the soil with just the rim sticking out will solve this problem.

Planting Procedure

- Drench the prepared bed with water. After a few days, it will be ready for planting. If it does not drain away the area is not suitable to plant a rose.
- For each plant, slit and remove the polythene plant bag. Check the condition of the roots, if they appear to be tight on the outside, loosen the root ball by breaking it open so that the roots make good contact with the fresh soil mixture.
- If the root ball appears fresh and loose, leave it undisturbed.
- Place the plant in the hole, making sure it is the correct height by adding or taking away soil from under it. If the bud union (a knob) is already below the surface of the soil in the container, cover the top of the container root ball with only a very thin layer of soil. If the bud union is visible above the soil level in the container, it needs to be settled deeper, 5 to 6 cm below the level of the bed.
- Once the plant is positioned correctly, fill in the enriched soil around it and firm down well with the feet to eliminate air pockets.
- Form a basin around the plant.
- Apply approximately 20 litres of water per plant.
- Firm the soil down again within a few days.
- Water every 3rd day for two three weeks. Daily watering by an automatic irrigation system is not a problem.
- Once the soil has settled after 2 to 3weeks, level the basin, mulch the bed and irrigate by sprinkler.

Bare Root Roses

When planting roses with bare roots, it is essential that no fertiliser, manure or fresh compost should touch the roots. Therefore, prepare holes or beds three to six months prior to planting. Alternatively, place a thin, protective layer of pure unmixd soil around the bare roots.



The different ingredients of the Ludwig's Planting Mix



A triangular bed is dug out at 60cm depth. Note the poor soil on the sides.



The subsoil has been loosened and enriched with Ludwig's Planting Mix.



The bed has been filled up and the roses have been placed at the correct spacing with their roots being slightly loosened.



A nicely loosened root ball.



The correct planting height, with the bud union just slightly below the soil surface. (5-6cm)



A basin has been formed around the plant and approximately 20litres of water has been applied.



A raised bed with newly planted roses.