



Miniature Roses: Selection and Care

by Rosie Bonar, UC Master Gardener

Many of us love to have roses in our gardens. They are just about as American as apple pie. Roses add beauty to our gardens and our vases and are relatively easy to grow and care for. When you are considering which roses to plant you may want to consider the miniature rose.

A miniature rose is a true rose bred to stay small in size. There are miniature hybrid teas, miniature floribundas, miniature climbing roses, miniature tree roses and miniature creepers. The flowers are smaller, the leaves are smaller, the canes are smaller and the spaces between the nodes are smaller. The thorns are even smaller (although plentiful!). But they are still a rose.

Because of its small size, a miniature rose has many landscape uses and advantages. Because they tend to be profuse bloomers, their beauty can be enjoyed for a long period of time. They make nice borders along a walk. They can be mixed with other plants in a perennial flower bed. They can be trained to climb a trellis. When grafted in tree form, they give a more formal look to a landscape. They are well suited to pots. They are often grouped in mass plantings as a ground cover. (If you would like to see miniature roses being used in many of these ways, visit the Ralph Moore Rose Garden on the corner of Hall and Main Streets in Visalia.)

Regular watering, along with plenty of sunshine (at least 6 hours per day) should meet their needs. Just like regular roses, they benefit from a light feeding during their blooming season. They need some pruning during their dormant period in the winter to help shape their growth and keep them healthy. Prune them as you would any other rose by pruning out the dead wood, taking out overlapping branches and opening up the center to allow movement of air and sunlight to the center of the plant.



Roses growing in the Ralph Moore Rose Garden in Visalia

Miniature roses can be purchased locally in nurseries and even in grocery stores. They can also be found on line. Nursery roses can be planted outdoors immediately. If you find a miniature rose in a grocery store displayed with tropical plants and cut flowers, you are seeing a rose that has been forced to bloom in a green house. It is displayed to tempt you with beautiful, and often unseasonable, blooms. It has not been acclimatized to live outdoors and it has probably not gone through its dormant season. (The dormant season is a time when the rose concentrates its energy to growing a healthy root system)

This grocery store rose can survive in your yard if you take the time to acclimatize it before planting it outside. After purchase, enjoy the blossoms for a few days in your home and then gradually harden it to being able to survive outside. That means taking about 1-2 weeks to get it used to outside temperatures, rather than the big shock of planting it outside in the garden immediately after purchase. Be sure to replant it in your yard where it can get the sunlight and properly drained soil that it needs.

When asked what my favorite roses are, I find it difficult to answer. Buying a rose is a personal choice. My favorite rose is one that grows well in our area and suits the spot I have in mind for it. My favorite rose is one that is healthy and happy. I love a strong scent. I love to enjoy them in a vase as well as on the bush. I do a little research when I am thinking of buying a new rose. I plan to have this rose to enjoy for years to come and so taking time to do some research is worth it. There are so many roses and so little time!

For more detailed information about rose care go to
<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/PLANTS/rose.html>

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