

Plant different kinds of Roses.

By Tami Reece

I was hoping to buy my wife something different for Valentine's Day. Any suggestions?

Justin R. Paso Robles

Tami Reece, UCCE Master Gardener

When anyone thinks of Valentine's Day, they always think of roses. Right now is the perfect time to buy bare root roses and the selection is extraordinary. You could buy two or three in her favorite color and she will have roses throughout the growing season. Prior to buying, think about where you will be planting the roses. Do you want a climbing rose to grow along your fence line or would a shrub rose do? Standard or rose trees are always elegant and can be grown in large containers. Is there a water source nearby? Roses need about 1 ½ to 2 inches of water a week. Roses also prefer full sun, but will get by on a minimum of 6 hours a day. If you do not have room for a full size rose, miniature roses always make a great patio plant. They grow well in a container in full sun.

If you want something a little more original, how about a flowering bulb? There are a lot of bulbs that were forced to flower early at your local gardening stores. The bulbs will bloom for several more weeks, and then the bloom will die. Cut back the bloom and stem, but do not cut the leaves. The bulb will store energy from the leaves to help with next year's bloom. Continue to water and when the leaves die, cut back and plant the bulb in your garden. Next spring, the bulbs will bloom again.

Another beautiful plant is heather. Choose plants with white, purple, or burgundy flowers that grow into a lovely bush. They like well-drained soil and full sun. When planting in the garden, make sure to not let the soil completely dry out the first year. Once the plant has an established root system, they are very drought tolerant. Another favorite is lavender. They are sweet smelling and very hardy. And as with the heather, once lavender is established, it will be tolerant of drought conditions. Happy Valentine's Day!