



Winterizing Roses



To winter protect (winterize) your roses simply means to give them added insulation (mulch, straw, etc.) around the base of the plant **after** they have experienced a prolonged freeze that induces dormancy. The purpose of this is to protect them from warm spells during the cold months that could promote growth. The following will help ease the transition from active growing to dormancy:

1. **Stop fertilizing roses after the first part of**

August- because-fertilization stimulates growth, and new growth damaged by a sudden temperature drop can place undue stress on the rose. Roses need to slow their growth rate for dormancy purposes

2. **Discontinue deadheading in August- because-**when spent flower heads turn into rose hips, it is a sign that the plant is preparing for dormancy
3. **Have a healthy and disease-free bush during the summer- because-**a healthy rose has a better chance of surviving a harsh winter than one with constant issues
4. **This is the hard part**-What kind of roses do you have? Grafted roses are the most tender **because-**the graft (also called the **bud union**) is temperature sensitive. If the rose dies back to the graft, but the roots are alive, it will send shoots up to grow a new, different rose bush
 - Begin using insulating materials after the rose has gone dormant; depending on your location, this could be anywhere from September to the end of November. If you have had at least 2 hard frosts below 25 degrees, the rose should show signs of dormancy
5. **Clean up leaf debris around roses-**Especially if you have been battling insects and diseases all summer. This will cut down on repeat problems in the spring. ****Tip-** spray winter canes with an anti-desiccant (like Wilt Pruf) to cut down on premature moisture loss from winter winds
6. **To prune or not to prune-** This is only okay for damaged and dead canes, otherwise, **DO NOT PRUNE- because-**pruning inhibits the natural hardening-off of tissues, and increases the likelihood of winter kill. In most cases, it stimulates growth, which is tender. It is best to wait until after the worst of the winter weather is past. In more exposed areas, long stems may be cut back somewhat for preventative snow damage. Save any "severe" pruning for spring
7. **Mulch-**For tender roses, using a rose collar helps to hold the mulch in place and keep out hungry critters like rabbits. On tender roses, add mulch up to 12" **because-**in Colorado, we have dry air, especially in winter. We also have extreme temperature fluctuations in early spring. From winter into spring is the period when roses suffer the most damage
8. **Water your roses during the winter at least once a month** (when temperatures allow)-If snow is on the ground, don't water
9. **Do not remove protection too early in the spring-**because of late season freezes that can kill tender new growth or blacken canes stimulated to grow by recent pruning