

# Native Roses

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Native type roses offer a sort of the survival of the fittest with minimum care. They are adapted to many soil types and are hardy in most growing conditions. The typical drawback is the blooms are not as large as many domestic type roses. However the native type roses require less pruning and are much more disease and pest resistant. Native type roses also produce rose hips which is a good food source for both us and wildlife. Botanists believe that roses evolved 60 million years ago, probably in Asia. The Greeks and Romans were particularly fond of roses, which come in a variety of brilliant colors. The hybrid tea rose is certainly a favorite of gardeners. After all, roses do require some special care and are susceptible to disease and insects, but it is worth a little extra care to grow roses.

Plant roses in full sun. They like 6 to 8 hours of sun preferably from morning to early afternoon. I also recommend using a phosphate fertilizer in the hole before planting the rose. Roses prefer a slightly acid soil. Periodically adding organic matter or something like sulfur will help keep the ph lower. The native roses grow in fairly large clumps and would provide very showy backgrounds or hedges in a landscape plan.

Most roses easily root from cuttings, taking cuttings from firm, young stems in the spring or early summer. Keep two to three leaves attached and allow for at least an inch of stem to insert into the soil for rooting. Roses will root at any point along the stem. Hasten rooting by slicing a strip of bark off opposite sides of the base of the cutting. Stick the cutting in rooting hormone powder and then slip it into a planting medium of 50 percent potting soil to 50 percent perlite or pumice. Keep the cuttings under a glass cloche or plastic cover to maintain humidity and place them in a warm location that gets morning sun and afternoon shade. They should root within three to eight weeks, depending on the time of year and growing situation. Once they've rooted, gradually move them into brighter light. Plant the cuttings in the garden when they have put on a significant amount of new growth.

Smooth rose (*Rosa blanda*, USDA Hardiness Zones 3–7, AHS Heat Zones 8–3). Smooth rose is an attractive, foolproof grower that reaches four to six feet tall and is nearly thornless. It is adaptable to moist or dry soil and sun or part shade, spreading quickly to form a dense thicket. The leaves are blue-green in color, and the stems feature spines at the bottom and none at the top. In early to midsummer, blooms open deep magenta and fade to lighter pink. Red hips follow the flowers.

Woods' rose (*Rosa woodsii*, Zones 3–8, 8–3). Also known as the desert wild rose, it grows best in full sun, but is adaptable to either moist or dry, rocky soil. Depending on conditions, it grows two to five feet tall and can form dense colonies up to 10 feet across. It is a

good choice for a slope to hold soil against erosion and for providing cover for wildlife. Its two-inch pink flowers appear from late spring to early summer, followed by bright red or orange hips.

There are many others to also consider in your landscaper options. Many of these native roses now are being bred or hybridized with other roses to provide disease resistance and hardiness to harsh growing conditions.

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