

HOME & GARDEN

Yesterday's roses are hard to beat

By PAT LEUCHTMAN
Recorder Columnist

Two weekends ago we went to New York to visit friends in Queens. Although in the middle of the city, they live on a tree-lined street, in an ivy-covered row house that borders on a communal courtyard filled with every color of rose, pale and vibrant. However, they were mostly hybrid tea

BETWEEN THE ROWS

roses which I am not willing to attempt to grow. Still, I love roses, but they must be hardy enough to withstand the temperatures in Heath and they must be disease and pest resistant because I do not want to spread a lot of poisons around my garden.

For this reason I am only choosing some of the old-fashioned roses. Our house came with an old rugosa growing in the front yard. It puts forth large single, deep pink blossoms with golden centers. It is very beautiful and very fragrant and nothing seems to bother it. The rugosa is famous for growing along the seashore where it seems to thrive in the sand and salt spray that spell death to so many plants. Since the rugosas do so well, I have added another, Blanc Double de Courbert, a white rose to my perennial border.

Gallicas and damasks (both used in potpourris), centifolias, mosses, rugosas and most shrub roses are among the hardest roses that you can grow in cold climates. Rugosas, most shrubs, some climbers and most of the Brownell hybrids are very disease resistant. A good selection of these tough roses can be gotten from Roses of Yesterday and Today, 802 Browns Valley Road, Watsonville, Calif. 95076. You will enjoy their catalog tremendously.

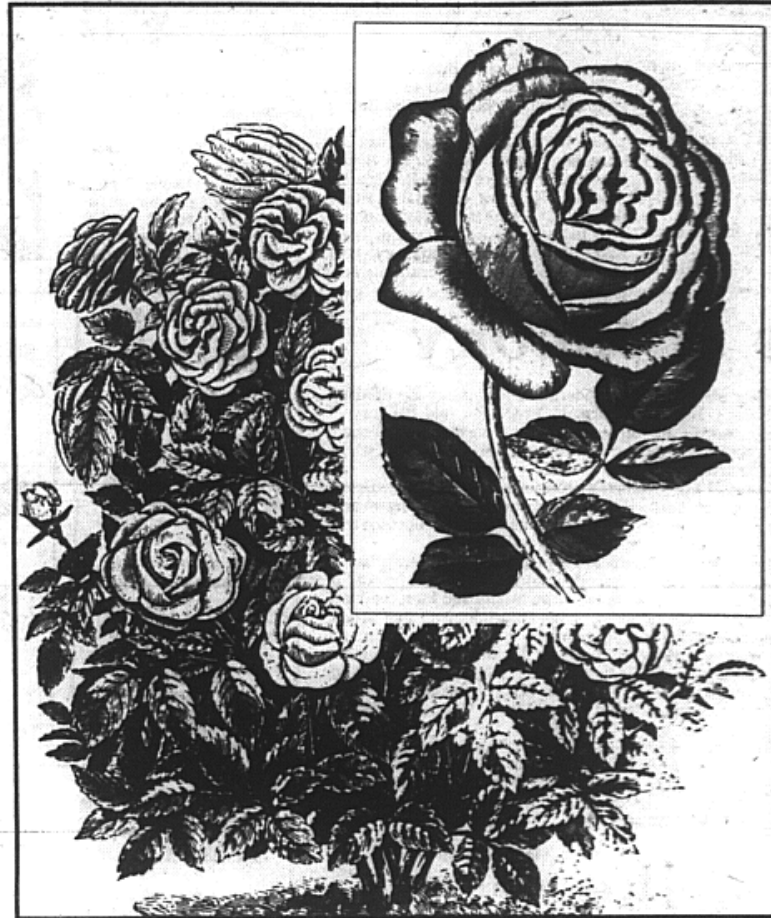
As with most plants, a healthy plant in a healthy soil will be most successful and this begins with careful planting. The hole should be generous, at least a foot deep and 18 inches across. I mix the dug soil with compost, peat moss and rotted manure. Loosen the soil in the bottom of the hole and build up a little cone of earth. Use this to spread out the roots of the bush and support them.

If your plants arrive from a nursery through the mail, they should be planted as soon as possible, although they will be all right in their packing for two or three days. Inspect the roots for damage before planting and make sure they do not dry out. I soak my new bushes in a pail of water for an hour or so while I prepare the planting hole.

Set the plant on the cone of earth, arranging the roots around and arrange it so that the knob on the stem which indicates the bud union will be just below the soil level. Fill in gently with the enriched soil, making sure no air pockets are left. Water well.

Mulch rose bushes to protect the roots which lie close to the surface and to conserve moisture. At least until bushes are well established they should be watered regularly, but take care not to wet the foliage because this will encourage black spot and mildew.

In the winter rose bushes will require more mulch protection. Wait until the ground has frozen



and then pile on additional mulch, hay or leaves, to a depth of perhaps 12 inches. This will keep the roots from heaving during periods of warmth and frost. Take the mulch off in the spring and compost it.

Roses should be fertilized twice a year. I use a top dressing of compost and rotted manure early in the spring when the winter mulch comes off, and another application in June just before the bushes begin to bloom. After each fertilization, the bushes should be watered deeply.

It is important not to fertilize roses late in the season because this will encourage new, tender

growth that will not harden off properly and it will die with the onset of severe winter.

Right now I am battling aphids on my Passionate Nymph's Thigh. I could not resist buying a rose with that name, and while it is an alba rose which is winter hardy, perhaps it is not as pest resistant as the rugosas. In any event, I am dousing it with pyrethrum because I don't want to use malathion which is what is usually recommended for aphids. If it doesn't survive, I will have learned my lesson about picking really tough bushes. I choose my vegetable seeds carefully, picking those disease resistant varieties and I know it is possible to choose roses the same way.

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