

Winter Protection for Roses



A hybrid tea rose showing exposed graft.



A hybrid tea rose properly mulched for winter.

Photos by Curtis Swift, Colorado State University Extension

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Hybrid teas, floribundas, grandifloras miniatures and climbing roses need protection from low temperatures and rapid temperature changes to prevent winter injury or possible death.

Bush type roses are protected by hilling or mounding soil around the base of the plants. Begin by removing fallen leaves and

other debris from around each plant. Mound soil 8 to 10 inches around the canes. Place straw or wood chips over the soil mound for additional protection.

If styrofoam rose cones are used, prune the bushes to allow the cones to be placed over the plants. Mound 6 to 8 inches of soil around the base of the plants. Then place the cone over the rose, securing it with bricks or other heavy objects. If not provided, small holes or slits should be placed in the top of the cones to provide ventilation.

Providing winter protection for climbing roses is a little more difficult. The canes could be removed from the trellis and carefully bent to the ground. Cover the canes with a few inches of soil and then mulch with straw.

Winter protection should be in place by the first of December. The materials should be removed before growth begins in the spring, usually early April.

Winter Gardening Activities for Kids of All Ages

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Windowsill gardens

— When snowdrifts keep your kids inside, try cultivating a windowsill garden. All you need is a sunny spot and a few containers of soil. Herbs are an excellent choice for windowsills.

Peculiar plants

— What kid wouldn't be fascinated by an insect-eating plant? Many garden centers sell Venus flytraps in their houseplant section. Visit your library or search the Internet for more information on the natural habitat and growth habits of this unusual plant.

Read a book — Books like *The Carrot Seed* or *Sunflower Houses* can spark your child's interest in gardening. See the Gardening Book List for Kids at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/hort/youth/booklist.htm> for more ideas.

Decorate while you wait — Let kids indulge their natural creativity by painting inexpensive terra cotta pots to use next spring, for repotting houseplants this winter, or for birthday and thank you gifts. Kid-safe, durable paints can be purchased at most craft or hobby stores.

Get a jump on spring — Plan a visit to your local garden center to buy seeds, or let your child help select varieties from the seed catalogs.



Fold seeds in a paper towel or place between glass and towel

1 or 2 paper towels to wick the water up

About 1/2" - 1" of water

Radish seeds (left) and radish sprouts at 4 days (right)

Watch seeds sprout — Line a glass jar with a damp paper towel and insert about 10 bean, radish or zucchini seeds between the glass and the towel. Leave it on the kitchen counter and check the paper every day to make sure it's still moist. Seeds should sprout in a few days.

Then start seeds indoors in March to plant outside after the last frost.

Garden crafts — There are several projects you can try with your kids, depending on their age and interest, such as hand-painted plant markers.

Terrariums — Carefully place some soil and a few mosses and plants inside a clean mayonnaise jar. Keep your indoor garden moist with a plant mister, and cover the opening with clear plastic wrap.

Feed the birds — Stock up on birdseed and suet and

feed the birds this winter. Have your child keep a record of all the species of birds that come to the feeder and what date each first was spotted.

Pot People — Draw or paint faces on small clay pots, then fill with soil. Plant grass seed, water and watch the "hair" grow.

Build a birdhouse — Birdhouse kits and plans are available at most garden centers and craft shops.

Source: American Association of Nurserymen

Make a Holiday Wreath

A wreath is an attractive, easy-to-make decoration for the upcoming holiday season. Materials needed to construct a wreath include pruning shears, scissors, wreath frame, No. 22 or 24 gauge florist wire, wire cutter and evergreen branches. Decorative materials, such as ribbon, bows, pine cones, holly, various fruits and ornaments, may be used to finish the wreath.

When selecting a wreath frame, individuals can choose from box wire, crimped wire, styrofoam, and straw frames. An ordinary wire coat hanger may also be fashioned into a small wreath frame. Frames, florist wire and other materials can be purchased at craft or hobby stores.

Evergreen branches can be obtained from the home landscape. A small amount of careful and selective pruning will not harm the trees and shrubs. Greens may also be purchased from garden centers, florist shops and Christmas tree lots or farms. Additional materials, such as pine cones and bittersweet, can be purchased or collected outdoors.

A 15-inch diameter wreath frame is ideal for most home decorations. Cut the greens into 4 to 6 inch sections. Begin by firmly attaching the end of the wire roll to the frame. Place a small bundle of greens on the


frame; then fasten the base of the twigs tightly to the frame with 2 or 3 turns of the wire. Position the second bundle of greens so as to cover the base of the first group.

Continue this procedure around the frame, placing the groups close together to produce a thick, full wreath. Tuck the base of the final bundle of greens beneath the foliage of the first group and fasten it to the frame. Decorate the wreath with a bow, cones, ornaments, etc. Wire each item separately and fasten it to the frame. Finally attach a wire hanger to the top of the wreath frame.

The wreath is now ready for hanging.

When constructing wreaths, use only fresh greens. Needles on old material will be dry and brittle. Fresh material will have a strong fragrance and pliable needles. Wreaths hung outdoors should remain fresh for 3 to 4 weeks. The average life of an indoor wreath, however, is 7 to 10 days. Indoor wreaths should be promptly removed when they become dry. The life of an indoor wreath can be prolonged by hanging it up only during special holiday occasions. Carefully place the wreath in a plastic bag and store in a cool location, such as a garage, during the remaining time.

Source: Richard Jauron, Iowa State University, Department of Horticulture



Garden Guide

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

- Start reviewing your garden notes to help with next year's plans.
- Check fruits, vegetables, corms and tubers you have in storage. Sort out any showing signs of rot and dispose of them.
- Clean power tools of all plant material and dirt. Replace worn spark plugs, oil, all necessary parts and sharpen blades. Store all tools in their proper place indoors, never outdoors where they will rust over the winter.
- Clean and fix all hand tools. Repaint handles or identification marks that have faded over the summer. Sharpen all blades and remove any rust.
- Be sure not to store apples or pears with vegetables. The fruits give off ethylene gas which speeds up the breakdown of vegetables and will cause them to develop off-flavors.
- African violets do well when potted in small pots. A good general rule is to use a pot one-third the diameter of the plant. Encourage African violets to bloom by giving them plenty of light. They can be in a south window during dark winter months. They bloom beautifully under fluorescent lights.
- After the ground freezes, mulch small fruit plants such as strawberries. One inch of straw or leaves is ideal for strawberries.
- Remove all mummified fruit from fruit trees and rake up and destroy those on the ground. Also, rake and dispose of apple and cherry leaves. Good sanitation practices reduce reinfestation of insects and diseases the following season.
- Order seed catalogs now for garden planning in January. For variety, consider companies that specialize in old and rare varieties or wild flowers.
- Bring out the bird feeders and stock them with bird seed for the birds. Remember to provide fresh water for them, too.
- Place Christmas trees away from fireplaces, radiators, heat vents and anything else that could dry the needles. Keep your Christmas tree well watered from the time it is brought home until it is discarded.
- Minimize traffic on a frozen lawn to reduce winter damage.
- Inspect trees and shrubs for bagworm capsules. Remove and destroy them to reduce next year's pest population.
- House plants with large leaves and smooth foliage such as philodendrons, dracaena and rubber plant, benefit if their leaves are washed with a damp cloth to remove dust.
- A home weather station that includes a minimum-maximum thermometer, a rain gauge and a weather log is a good gift for a gardener.

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