

Roses for noses

The fragrance of the sweetest rose is beyond any other flower scent. It is irresistible, enthralling; you cannot leave it."

– Alice Morse Earle

The sweet scents of roses have enchanted gardeners around the world for centuries. Here in North Dakota our very own state flower, the wild prairie rose, is cherished for its rugged beauty and its lovely fragrance.

But our state flower is too wild and too thorny for home landscapes. Plus, it only blooms for a couple weeks. We have better choices for our home landscape:

RUGOSA roses are perfect for North Dakota. They are vigorous and extremely hardy. They can withstand heat, cold, wind, and salty soil. They bloom throughout summer and in autumn you will be pleased with their orange foliage and bright red hips. Rugosas are often used for hedges, particularly in exposed sites.

'Blanc Double de Coubert' is a popular rugosa. The disease-

resistant bushes bear clusters of pure white, semi-double flowers throughout the summer (photo on next page). Its licorice-scented flowers fill the air with fragrance, day and night.

'Belle Poitevine' has soft pink, semi-double, flat blooms. Famous for its rich fragrance and repeat blooms, this disease-resistant variety grows densely and up to 5 feet tall and wide.

'Frau Dagmar Hartopp' freely produces lovely pink, single blooms on disease-resistant, 4-foot shrubs. It's famous for its brilliant scarlet hips.

'Hansa' has large, double, reddish-purple flowers with a strong, spicy clove scent. The foliage is highly susceptible to black spot.

'Therese Bugnet' bears clusters of ruffled, bright lilac-pink

flowers with a sweet fragrance. It offers a nice display of red foliage in the fall and the canes remain deep red throughout the winter. It's susceptible to powdery mildew, rust, and leaf spots.

Several **MODERN SHRUB** varieties are known for blooming profusely all summer long. This trait, along with improved disease resistance and winter hardiness, make them remarkable landscape plants. Unfortunately, most shrub rose varieties have very little fragrance. A notable exception is 'Cuthbert Grant', which has fragrant, velvety red blooms.

The Buck roses are gaining popularity across the Midwest. Developed by Dr. Griffith Buck of Iowa State University over 20 years ago, these are among the hardiest and disease-resistant varieties available. A few of the



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varieties, including 'Hawkeye Belle' and 'Honeysweet' (shown below) are fragrant.

Of course, there are many **HYBRID TEA** varieties that have wonderful fragrance. Among the best are 'Chrysler Imperial' and 'Mister Lincoln' (red), 'Fragrant Cloud' (scarlet; shown on first page), 'Double Delight' (red/yellow bicolor; shown below), 'Sunsprite' (yellow), 'Tahitian Sunset' (apricot), 'Voodoo' (orange), 'Tiffany' (pink), 'Scentimental' (red/white striped), 'Aromatherapy' (deep pink), Pope 'John Paul II' (white), 'Sheer Bliss' (ivory) and 'Neptune' (lavender). All hybrid teas require winter protection.

No matter the type of rose you grow, the fragrance of a rose flower reaches its peak in the late morning. Warm, sunny days and moist soil maximize the production of a rose's fragrant oils.

Keep your roses healthy. Roses from healthy bushes are more fragrant than roses from disease-infected plants.

Try to avoid spraying toxic fungicides in your rose garden. Nobody likes to stick their nose in a rose covered with pesticide. To minimize the use of these toxic

chemicals, select varieties that naturally resist disease. Also, space the plants properly, allowing for lots of air movement among bushes. Give your roses full sun.


Water the soil, not the leaves. Wet leaves—especially at night—will invite disease problems. Water deeply—this will encourage a deep root system to develop.

The best treatment for your rose garden doesn't come from a garden center. It is your *shadow*. Get out in the garden and enjoy the roses. Look for the first signs of diseases/pests and take action immediately. Researchers at Cornell University discovered an organic fungicide that became very popular in public rose gardens. This recipe is 1 teaspoon each of baking soda, lightweight horticultural "sun-spray" oil, and insecticidal soap per quart of water. Avoid spraying on hot sunny days so as to avoid burning the foliage.

If you prepare dried rose petals you can enjoy their fragrance year-round. Roses are easily air-dried. Harvest the blooms when the buds are about to open. Tie the stems with string and hang

them upside down in a warm, dark, well-ventilated place for two weeks. The varieties 'Mister Lincoln' and 'Chrysler Imperial' are noted for maintaining their fragrance after drying.

Roses can also be dried using desiccants. Harvest rose blooms when they are open. Place the blooms upright in an airtight container and gently cover with silica gel crystals. Close the container and allow the petals to dry for 10 days. Some gardeners then open the container and allow the petals to dry further within the crystals for 10 more days.

Go ahead and plant a fragrant rose in your landscape this summer. Set it near a window or doorway and enjoy nature's sweetest scent. 

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'Blanc Double de Coubert' rugosa, 'Honeysweet' Buck, and 'Double Delight' hybrid tea rose.