



Columbia Nursery

Planting & Caring for Shrub Roses in Northwest Montana (Zones 3–5)

1. Choose Hardy, Zone-Appropriate Varieties

Select cold-hardy shrub roses like the Easy Elegance, Rugosa, or Knock Out® series, which are bred for northern climates. Look for varieties hardy to Zone 3 or 4 with strong disease resistance and preferably grown on their own roots (not grafted).

2. Site Selection & Planting

Choose a sunny location with at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day. Ensure soil is well-drained—roses dislike having 'wet feet'. Improve drainage with compost if needed. Space roses adequately to promote air circulation, which helps prevent fungal disease.

3. Water Deeply and Consistently

Water at the base of the plant to keep leaves dry and reduce disease risk. Provide 1–2 inches of water weekly, increasing during hot, dry, or windy periods. Mulch around plants to help retain soil moisture and suppress weeds.

4. Fertilize Thoughtfully

In spring, apply a balanced slow-release fertilizer such as Espoma Organic Rose-Tone. Optionally, apply ALL-IN-ONE Rose & Flower care every 6 weeks to fertilize & treat insects & diseases. Cease fertilizing by early August to avoid stimulating late-season growth that is vulnerable to frost.

5. Prune Annually in Early Spring

Wait until new growth appears (usually late April to May). Prune out dead or damaged canes back to healthy wood. Thin the center to improve air circulation and shape the plant. Avoid fall pruning.

6. Winter Protection Is Crucial

After the first hard frost, mound soil or compost 6–12 inches around the base of each shrub. Cover with straw, leaves, or rose collars for added insulation. Leave rose hips in place during fall to signal the plant to enter dormancy.



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Product Recommendations

Composts/Soil Amendment	Fertilizers
Espoma Organic Bio-tone Starter*	Espoma Organic Rose Tone 4-3-2* (slow release)
G&B Soil Conditioner	BioAdvanced All-In-One Rose & Flower Care 9-14-9 (every 6 weeks)
GG Compost	Espoma Organic Flower Tone*
;;Organic Poultry Compost*	Alaska Fish Fertilizer 5-1-1*
Compost & Manure	

*Denotes safe for organic gardening

Troubleshooting	Treats
BioAdvanced All-In-One Rose & Flower Care (9-14-9)	Fertilize & treats listed insects & diseases. Water into the plant base. Protects for 6 weeks.
BioAdvanced 3-in-1 Insect, Disease & Mite Control	Listed insects & diseases, trees, shrubs, roses & flowers, non-edible plants. Spray on for 30 days protection.