

Common Rose Problems

A rose problem is almost always a reflection of the plant's environment. Poor drainage, lack of adequate water, poor soil preparation, insects, diseases – all are environmental conditions that can either be remedied or prevented from the start. The first line of defense against any rose problem is a strong, healthy plant. Try to select cultivars and species that are hardy and disease resistant. Follow label directions on all pesticides to avoid plant damage.

Masses of bugs on the buds and leaves: Aphids - green, red, or black soft bugs, 1/8" or smaller, found clustered mostly on new growth. Most insecticidal sprays (acephate/ pyrethrins), including insecticidal soap, are effective. Aerosol insecticides labeled for plant pests will also work. Or simply hose off the insects when you water.

Blooms are shredded, discolored, or buds are distorted: Thrips – light brown insects about 1/8" long. Squeeze an open bloom and watch the inside of the petals for movement. Apply insecticides containing acephate/neem oil/disulfoton when 1" or more of new growth has occurred in spring.

Leaves appear fuzzy on surface, underside has small red specks with webbing: Spider-mite – microscopic in size, but visible to the naked eye. Hot weather is the prime season for spider-mite activity. Apply insecticidal soap, spray oil, or miticides (acephate/neem oil/pyrethrins). All treatments must come in contact with the mites.

Leaves eaten leaving a skeleton structure. Unopened flower buds chewed: Beetles – most notorious is the Japanese beetle, metallic brown with green head. Liquid sevin, rotenone, or bacillus papillae (Bp) can be applied. Physically removing or shaking beetles off of the plant also is a viable alternative.

Tumor-like growths on canes, roots, or at bud union: Gall – a bacterial problem. Prune away affected section if possible. Sterilize your pruning tool with bleach or alcohol to prevent bacteria from spreading. Treat soil with bactericide.

Leaves are distorted, white powdery material appears on the forming buds and leaf tops or undersides: Powdery Mildew – a fungal disease fostered by cool nights, warm days, and high humidity. Spray with fungicides such as chlorothalonil, triforine, or myclobutanil. Make sure that plants have good circulation and ample sunlight.

Dark black round spots (pinpoint to quarter-sized) on the leaves. Half of leaf yellows or leaf drops completely from the plant: Black Spot – this is a fungus favored by rainy weather or improper watering. Spray with neem oil, triforine, chlorothalonil, or daconil. Spray the undersides of leaves as this is where fungus spores are found. When watering, keep foliage dry or water in the morning.

Here are some websites that may provide additional help: www.ars.org (or) www.rose.org