

Landscape with Roses: Gardens - Walkways - Arbors - Containers

Jeff Cox

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Roses are one of the oldest plants known to man. They appear in Shakespeare's plays, as in this passage, from *Antony and Cleopatra*: "He wears the rose of youth upon him." It is written that Persian poets and Mogul emperors lured doe-eyed maidens into perfumed rose gardens.

In the past, roses have been treated as delicate plants requiring separate beds where they could be sprayed, pruned, fed, and nursed into bloom, apart from the rest of the garden. Recent advances in breeding, points out the author, have created hardier, disease-resistant, repeat-blooming roses that grow well in a variety of soils and conditions.

Cox, who has hosted two television garden shows, begins with advice on designing with roses. He provides photographs and line drawings of formal and informal arrangements in cottage, Mediterranean-style, and Sunbelt gardens.

Cox offers information on the types of plants available—from eight-inch miniatures to forty-foot climbers—and on the choices of fragrances and colors. He explains the various classes of roses and their different uses in the garden (hedging, for example, or mixed beds and borders, or to cover arbors, trellises, fences, pergolas, and gazebos). There's a chapter that contains advice on foundation plantings that anchor a house to the ground and grow up walls and around windows. These can be used to beautify decks, porches, and patios. Cox also gives instructions on mixed plantings of annuals and perennials in beds, borders, orchards, and herb gardens.

There is advice on buying roses and on ways to keep them healthy, on planting and transplanting them, and on propagating, pruning, deadheading, and pests and diseases.

The four-color photographs, ranging in locales from the United States to Canada and England, complement Cox's text. The author's innovative ideas could add up to a lot of work, but the pleasure of seeing the roses bloom will be worth the effort.

GEORGE COHEN (March / April 2002)

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