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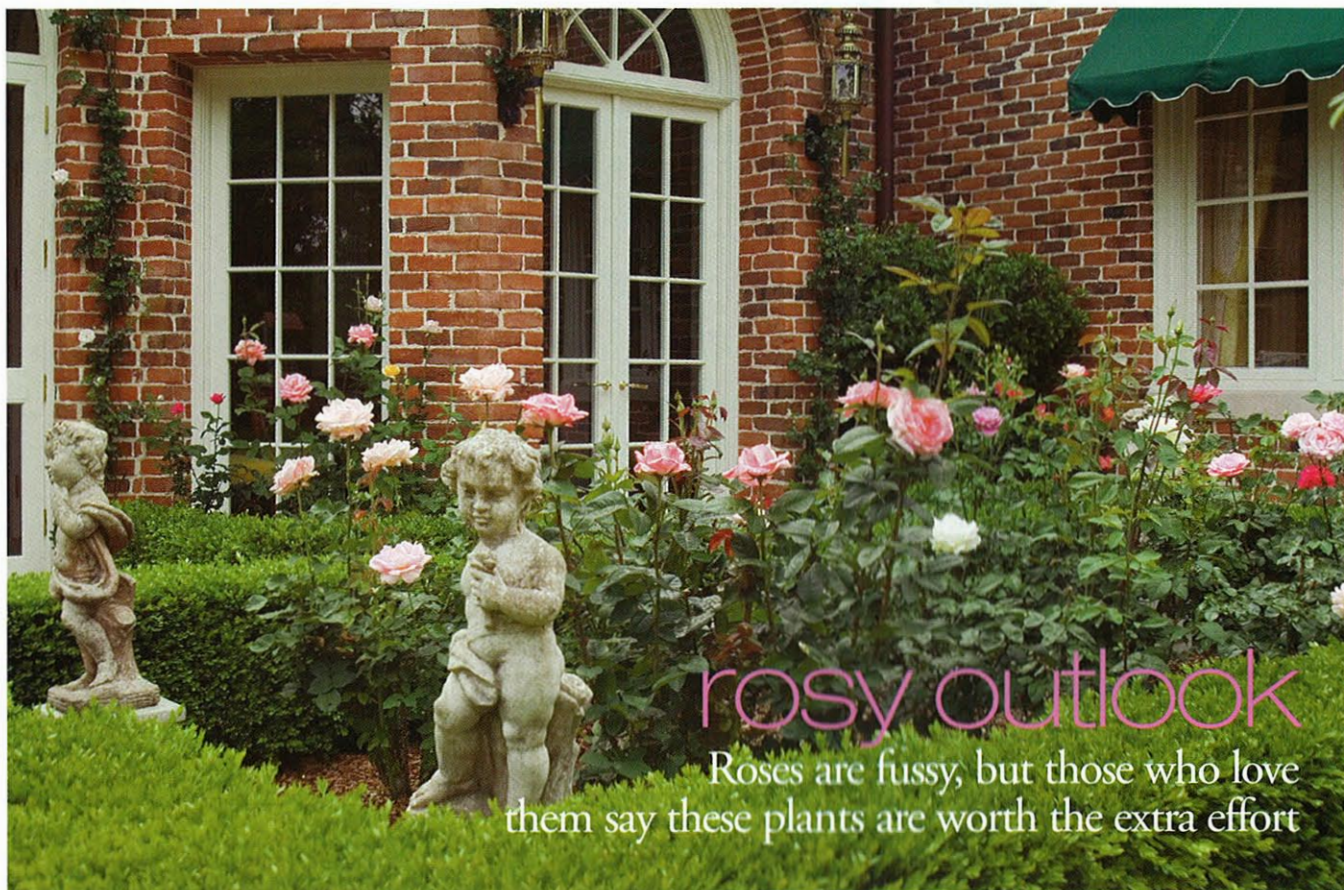
**SPLASH PADS**

July / August 2007



\$3.95

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## rosy outlook

Roses are fussy, but those who love them say these plants are worth the extra effort

**PROBABLY NO OTHER FLOWER EVOKES MORE EMOTIONS** among gardeners than roses. Their beauty draws many into obsession, transforming them into “rose people.”

Rose people often enjoy the ritual of caring for their beloved plants as much as the months of blooms that come from their efforts. Some, like Barbara Shook, love them mostly for their looks. “She loves to cut them,” says Kelly Homan of Troy Rhone Garden Design, which maintains the Shook gardens.

The world of roses can be complex and intimidating—just trying to understand the varieties can make a non-rose person dizzy. There are hybrid teas, heirloom, miniatures, climbing, shrub, polyanthas, floribundas and more—the list seems infinite. And even rose people

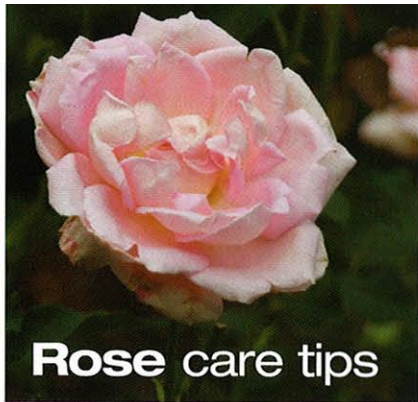
will admit these plants deserve their high-maintenance reputation. But, if you get into a routine of regular spraying for diseases and insects, which are their weakness, you might discover that your first perfect bloom has you falling in love, too.

Robert Eskew, American Rose Society member and master gardener, often speaks about roses at Birmingham Botanical Gardens. He explains why he’s a rose person and dedicated to our national flower: “If you take care of your plants you’ll have blooms from May to the middle of November,” he says. “They will bloom four to five cycles a year if they are a repeat bloomer.”

Problematic roses are often caused by people simply not using the right treatment, he says. For example, the

frequent problem of black spot requires a fungicide to treat, so make sure you’re not treating with insecticide. “Use common sense,” Robert says. “Read and follow the directions on the label.” And, when in doubt, call the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service (ACES) Master Gardener Hotline at 205.879.6964.

**THIS PAGE:** Barbara Shook’s patio rose garden contains hybrid tea roses, which have long stems and big blooms that are great for cutting, says Kelly Homan. Many heirloom varieties with smaller blossoms or shorter stems and shrub roses, such as ‘Knock Out’ roses, are also beautiful but not as good for arrangements. **FACING PAGE:** Even novices can have blooms like this for six months a year if they remember the basics: sun, air, fertilizer and routine spraying for insects and disease. Expert Robert Eskew wets his roses in the early morning. Doing that in the evening can contribute to black spot, though, unless the leaves can dry before nightfall.



## Rose care tips

ROSES, SIMILAR TO MOST PLANTS, HAVE FAIRLY BASIC NEEDS—THEY JUST NEED THEM MORE OFTEN. HERE, TROY RHONE OF TROY RHONE GARDEN DESIGN AND ROBERT ESKEW OF THE AMERICAN ROSE SOCIETY AND ACES MASTER GARDENER SHARE SUCCESSFUL ROSE-GROWING TIPS.

- **ROSES REQUIRE LOTS OF SUN**

**AND BREATHING ROOM.** Plant in a spot with excellent air circulation, to help avoid disease.

- **INSECTS AND MOLD ARE ATTRACTED TO ROSES.** The feeling isn't mutual.

Beginners can start by spraying with a two-in-one fungicide/insecticide (or a three-in-one with fertilizer) every 7 to 14 days, but make sure to coat the tops and bottoms of leaves as well as the blooms, which can hide insects. It's wise to have the soil tested to determine fertilization needs (call ACES for information).

- **ROSES LIKE TO BE CUT AND PRUNED.**

Both stimulate more blooms. Always cut flowers at a point on the stem just above a five-leaf cluster, then get the blossoms into water as soon as possible. Prune dead blooms to a five-leaf cluster, too; don't just "deadhead" them by hand. By late fall, leave the dead blooms—which are seed heads—on the plant. Prune in early March and again, though less severe, in late August to have another blooming season. (For pruning tips, refer to the ACES Web site: [www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu)).

### resources

#### ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE (ACES)

Birmingham Botanical Gardens Hanna Center office and  
Master Gardener Hotline: 205.879.6964  
[www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu)

#### TROY RHONE GARDEN DESIGN

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