



## **GROWING MINIATURE ROSES INDOORS**

By a sunny window or under lights these beautiful little miniature roses will flower quite dependably if they are treated right. With some effort to bring outdoor conditions into the home during the winter months it is indeed possible to enjoy these charming little plants indoors. Although any miniature rose can be successfully grown as a potted rose it is somewhat easier if the smaller, more compact varieties are chosen for this purpose.

### **Success With Winter Indoor Growing**

Miniature roses require three main things: light, humidity and a moderate temperature. The worst problems, as well as with all indoor plants are over watering, under watering and fertilizing too much at this time of year.

### **Light**

Miniature roses can be grown in sunlight alone, in an unobstructed southern window, in a greenhouse or in a sun room, although keep in mind that cloudy, stormy days are common in winter and reduced light levels hinder growth and blooming. Sunlight can be supplemented or replaced by fluorescent lights. Optimum lighting to achieve maximum growth is sixteen hours per day of high-intensity light combined with high humidity and daily watering. High-intensity light is that provided by four forty-watt lamps light fixture located about 8"-10" above the top of the plants. Miniature roses prefer a dark period each day for normal growth. All plants need some darkness periodically to grow well or to trigger flowering. It is not the length of day, which affects growth but the duration of the dark period that follow.

### **Temperature**

Temperature during the plant's daytime can range between 55-75F or 13C-24C. Higher temperatures will create more rapid growth and more blooms. The plants will need more frequent watering and fertilizing and closer watch to prevent insects and disease. At lower temperatures growth will be slower and flowering less profuse. Plants will need watering less frequently and diseases develop less rapidly. Temperatures may drop slightly at night but do remember that temperatures that are comfortable for people are comfortable for miniature roses.

### **Humidity**

An absolute must. Set plants on a waterproof tray at least 2" deep. Fill tray with non-porous hard material such as small pebbles, coarse gravel or marble chips. Pour water into the tray to within one half inch of the top surface of the pebbles and this will establish needed humidity underneath and around your miniature roses. It will supply 50-60% humidity. Make sure that water never touches the bottom of the pots.

## **Water**

When watering do so slowly. If pot sits in a saucer discard any water left sitting in that saucer. One thorough way of watering is to immerse the pot in a pail of tepid water, holding in there until bubbling stops, then you know surely that it has been well watered. While it is advisable to water very heavily to flush out excess salts from the potting soil, keep in mind tap water adds many unwanted salts and compounds like chlorine.

## **Fertilizer**

Your miniature rose has come from the grower already fertilized so do not add any fertilizer at this point even if you are repotting. Wait a couple of weeks then fertilize with any recommended rose fertilizer, liquid preferably as it is instantly available, using 1/3 the recommended strength but twice as often. Therefore, fertilize little and often. That way you can see how the plant is behaving and if it is in need of special attention. Slow down on fertilizing any stressed or unhealthy looking plant. Fertilize only when plants are growing well, ease off towards the end of a flowering span and don't feed until they start again to make growth.

## **Insects**

Insect problems may or may not occur. If your little roses start losing leaves, have yellow spots on the leaves or start to lose their shine, chances are you may have an insect problem. Aphids seldom attack but if you do notice any miniature green or black-sucking insects anywhere on the plant, either spray with insecticide soap such as Safers or wash with a tepid soapy water, then rinse, repeating this whole operation in six days. Red Spider Mites thrive in the warm dry atmosphere of our homes. They are identifiable by yellow spots on the leaves and fine webbing under the leaves and cause leaves to fall. Take your plant to the sink every time it is watered and wash the leaves swishing the pot carefully back and forth under a gentle tap of tepid water. If an attack occurs despite the tactics, try a good indoor aerosol for houseplants or insecticide soap such as Safers. These mites take three days to kill and lay two hundred eggs every seven days so repeat any spraying treatment again in five days. White fly, a tiny flying insect, is noticeable when the plant is disturbed. Sevin may be used once a week until they are controlled or control by spraying Safers every five days for four or five times to kill the hatching young.

## **Summary**

Examine your little roses weekly and either syringe them gently under a tap or spray with an indoor insecticide. They will certainly appreciate a weekly showering anyway as it washes away household film, insects and disease organisms from the foliage. If showered regularly you may even be able to forget poisons, bombs and sprays.