



...the red, red rose. In ageless sleep, she finds repose.

- *Sleeping Beauty 1959*

Now is the time of year when your roses are preparing for their long winter's repose. Here are some ways to help your roses weather the cold winter and wake up refreshed and ready to go next spring. Before the first hard frost, which for us in the Denver Metro Area is usually sometime between late September and mid-October, stop dead heading the spent heads and blooms from your roses. You should also stop any nitrogen fertilizer and slowly decrease your watering. These are all signals to your roses that it's time to stop growing and time to get ready for bed.



After the first hard frost, it's time to give your roses some extra protection. The most common way to protect roses is to mound soil around the base of the plant about 10" to 12" high to cover the vulnerable bud union (Picture 1). You can either use some old top soil or potting soil you might have laying around or you can dig up soil from your garden. But be sure to dig the soil from another part of the garden. Using soil from right around your roses could expose their roots to cold air which could damage or even kill them.





After you've made your mound, place a rose collar around your rose. You can buy one or make your own out of cardboard, metal, plastic, wire-mesh, tar paper or even layers of newspapers stapled together. The collar encircles the rose (Picture 2) and is filled with dry leaves, dry clippings or any other dry mulch (Picture 3). Then pile a little dirt on top to keep everything from blowing away. Early in the springtime, you can take away the collar, but leave the mulch in place until there is no danger of freezing. After the last frost of the year, remove all the mulch and soil. Your "Sleeping Beauties" will be ready to wake up and enjoy the spring!