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## Rosy Days

By: *Lunzeta Chretien*, The News Star ([www.thenewsstar.com](http://www.thenewsstar.com))

Cristy Bankston refers to the relationship she has with her roses as a "love thing."

"They're hard to grow," she said. "It's a challenge; you have to put in a lot of time with them and groom them."

It's hard work, but there are perks - she can have fresh roses whenever she wants them nine months of the year.

Bankston and her husband, Waco, have nearly 60 rose bushes and other flowers in their yard.

Those who are willing to tackle the flower that has earned a reputation of being a high maintenance plant have a few more days to plant them. Roses are generally planted from mid-February to the first of April, said Ken Maki, horticulturist with the LSU AgCenter.

The bloom season for roses depends on the type of rose you have, Maki said. Some bloom only once, while others are multiseasonal bloomers.

The Bankstons' roses bloom from April to December. The family hopes to see the first bloom in mid- to late April.

If you decide to grow roses on new ground, Maki suggests spraying the area with a weed killer such as Roundup, a super concentrate weed killer.

The era of modern roses was established in 1867 with the introduction of the first hybrid tea, La France, by the French breeder Guillot. The hybrid tea rose is the most popular to grow, Maki said, but it's also the hardest to upkeep.

Most hybrid tea roses need to be sprayed on a weekly basis to control disease. They also need to be watered and pruned on a consistent basis, Maki said. "They just need the over all care."

Bankston said she spends at least three hours a week caring for her rose bushes.

"We chose the hardest one for the challenge," Bankston said.

Once the roses have sprouted, Bankston said she can easily cut 90 to 120 a day and still have plenty left in the yard.

"Anytime of the year our home smells like roses, and they make great gifts,"

Bankston said.

Roses come in hundreds of varieties and colors, Maki said, and many of them can be grown here.

The England bred roses, EarthKind and David Austin, are durable and good choices for those who prefer low maintenance flowers.

"The EarthKind rose is one you can plant and take care of for the first year, and from then on they're good from there," Maki said.

Different hybrids and crosses of roses are developed each year. But through the many crosses and variations of roses, the fragrance has been lost, something that horticulturist are trying to incorporate back into the beautiful blooms.

According to the American Rose Society, no other flower has a wider range of size, color, shape and form than the rose. This makes the rose adaptable to any garden setting.

Roses offer a wide selection of flower colors - single, bi-color, multi-color, blend, striped and hand painted.

The shape of the blooms can be globular, open-cupped, quartered, flat, rosette, pompon or high centered.

Roses are among the most versatile flowers, and they will survive up to 10 days as cut flowers. They can grow anywhere from two to 25 feet tall.

The flowers come in every shape, size, and color imaginable, Maki said, making them easy to love.

"No matter who you are, you can find a rose to fit your needs.," Maki said.

#### **Basic rose care**

- Choose locally adapted varieties. Do some research to make sure you plant the best roses for your area. Not all roses grow well everywhere.
- Plant in full sun. Most roses need a minimum of six to eight hours of direct sunlight. Less sun means fewer blooms and more disease problems. Mulch with compost, bark chips or other organic matter to conserve moisture and reduce weeds.
- Water and mulch. In midsummer, most roses do well with one good, deep irrigation per weekend during dry spells.
- Fertilize. Roses are heavy feeders and need regular applications of nitrogen fertilizer to keep blooming
- Prune. Roses need annual pruning during dormancy to keep them healthy and vigorous.

*SOURCE: [www.bayeradvanced.com](http://www.bayeradvanced.com)*

## Pruning

### Hybrid Tea Roses

- Remove dead or damaged canes
- Remove suckers
- Select flowering canes
- Cutback flowering canes to 12 to 24 inches high
- Clean-up
- Fertilize

SOURCE: [www.bayeradvanced.com](http://www.bayeradvanced.com)

### Top roses for fragrance

- Double Delight
- Elle
- Honey Perfume
- Memorial Day
- Midas Touch
- Mr. Lincoln
- Sentimental
- Sheer Bliss
- Sun Sprinkles

SOURCE:

<http://gardening.about.com/od/rose1/tp/FragrantRoses.htm>

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