

# Heirloom Garden

Raising roses in the City of Roses

If you haven't heard yet, Portland is called the City of Roses. And it's for a reason. We have a wonderful climate for them. And if you haven't looked around lately, we have a lot of them!

But perhaps you've heard how fickle they can be? Rust, blackspot, gangly growth: It's true, these things can happen. But my secret to growing the eight roses we have in our garden is growing only heirloom roses, and those that are specifically known to be resistant to the problems I don't like to deal with. Like rust, blackspot and gangly growth.

Roses haven't always been the fey things they're known for now. Hybridizers bred roses so feverishly, all with the goal of producing

the one perfect bloom to win the prize. Along that path, scent, bush form, disease resistance, all seemed to fall by the wayside—all the things that are so important to me! So I've steered to only growing heirloom roses, and those growing on their own root stock. Grown on their own roots, heirloom roses withstand winters much better

and can live 100 years or more. They're healthier, and produce some of the most decadent blooms, ranging in scents of rose water to cloves to sugar.

One of my favorites this year is Jude the Obscure, named after the 19th century novel by Thomas Hardy. The bush is exploding with large, cup-shaped blooms that range in color from cream to yellow to pink, and the scent is the very best I've found. Not a spot of rust to be found on that bush. I pruned for structure and health in February (always remember to prune roses on or after Presidents Day) and have fed Jude twice with good, organic rose food. The bouquets just keep coming—one bouquet fills the room with glorious scent.

Another popular rose in our garden is Lavender Lassie. She's a hybrid musk Rambler. Ramblers have flexible stems and are great to grow on fences or structures where you want the rambling rose look. Her flowers aren't really lavender, but more of a pink, and again, its scent just knocks you out.

Where to get heirloom roses? Take a trip through the country and visit Heirloom Roses in St. Paul. Home to one of the most famous rose growers in the world, Heirloom Roses is one of my



**Sassy Gardener**  
BY LEANN LOCHER

most favorite places to take visitors this time of year. The demonstration gardens will blow you away, with arbor after wall after row of luscious blooming roses. Stroll the gardens, sample all of the amazing flavors of rose scent and find your favorite. Stop by the nursery and pick up your favorite to take home and plant. It will be a small start, but within a few years, you'll be asking yourself why you used to hate roses. 10

LEANN LOCHER gardens, along with her roses, dog, two cats and partner, in her rambling North Portland garden. She loves to hear from readers and can be reached at [sassygardener@gmail.com](mailto:sassygardener@gmail.com), or visit her gardening blog at [www.sassygardener.com](http://www.sassygardener.com).



Is there anything as romantic as a vase of old-fashioned roses?

## Rose Petal Jam

So you're on the planting edibles train but wanting to squeeze in a rose bush or two? Here's your justification: Roses are edible.

½ pound pink or red rose petals (not sprayed!)  
2 cups sugar  
4 ½ cups water  
Juice of 2 lemons

Wash your rose petals, and cut off the white bottom of each petal. Place the petals in a bowl, and sprinkle a tablespoon or two of sugar over them, coating each petal. Bruise the petals with your fingers, then cover the bowl with plastic wrap. Let this sit overnight in a cool spot.

In a saucepan, combine sugar, water and lemon juice. Over low heat, stir to dissolve. Stir in the rose petals and allow to simmer for 20 minutes. Bring to a boil and boil for five minutes until the mixture thickens. Using a jelly thermometer, cook and stir until the jam reaches 221 degrees. Pour into a clean, warmed jar and cover. Will keep in the fridge for several weeks.



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