

**Q**uestion: The leaves on my roses are getting ugly black spots and turning yellow. What is wrong? How can I treat it? Can it be prevented?

**A**nswer: Black spot is a fungus (*Diplocarpon rosae*) and it is the most common rose disease.

It is found wherever there are roses. Black spot attacks from the ground and progresses up the plant. It begins when very dark brown or black spots develop on leaves and stems, followed by a yellowing of the leaves around the spots.

Black spot will weaken and stress the bush making it more susceptible to pests and other diseases. If not treated, the bush could lose all of the foliage.

Moisture and humidity combined with a lack of air circulation around the plant provides the perfect environment for the proliferation of black spot.

Black spot spores overwinter in leaves and canes that are infested with the spores. When spring comes, the spores begin germinating and are spread by water splashing them onto the surfaces of the plants.

For infection to occur, the fungal spores on the leaf surface must be wet for at least seven hours. Once infected, they produce more spores, and with water, continue to spread the infection.

Knowing this, you can see how important it is to water your roses correctly. Water roses at their base, never from the top down. If sprinklers are hitting your roses, adjust them to prevent water hitting the roses.

If that is not possible, water in the morning to allow the leaves time to dry out. Also, gently shaking the plant after an overhead watering will help shed the unneeded water.

Air circulation around the rose bush is critical to allow any moisture to dissipate. Prune in a way that



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**Margo Roten**  
Ask a Master Gardener

allows the center of the bush to be open to the sun and air circulation.

Also, be sure to remove any affected leaves from the bush and remove any leaves that have fallen to the ground. Discard all affected plant matter. To prevent the spread of this, or any disease, sterilize any garden tools used on diseased plants.

Fungicides will not cure affected leaves, but with regular application will prevent new infections. They need to be applied, depending on the product, every seven to 14 days.

There are many chemical treatments as well as organic treatments for



black spot. You have many of both to choose from.

**SOME CHEMICAL**

**TREATMENTS INCLUDE:**

- copper fungicide
- chlorothalonil
- ferbam
- captan
- sulfur

**SOME ORGANIC**

**TREATMENTS INCLUDE:**

- a mixture of one part

milk, mixed with 2 parts of water

■ 4 cups water, ½ teaspoon dishwashing liquid, stirred then add ¼ teaspoon Neem oil four times, stirring after each quarter teaspoon

■ 1½ tablespoons baking soda, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, ½ tablespoons liquid hand soap,

1 tablespoon vinegar – mix and add to 1 gallon of water.

For any future rose purchases consider choosing disease-resistant roses. There are too many to list here but some of the most common include Elizabeth Taylor, Mikado, Mister Lincoln, Miss All-American Beauty and Tropicana.

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Do you have a gardening or insect question? Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners at [douglasmg@oregonstate.edu](mailto:douglasmg@oregonstate.edu) or 541-672-4461 or visit 1134 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Douglas County Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the OSU Extension Service serve the people of Douglas County.