

## *Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian* **Showers of Flowers**



**Mesmerizing passionflowers will send runners several feet from the mother plant.**

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### **Rose Requirements**

Caring for roses requires time and patience, but roses are not fussy. Growers recommend planting roses in areas where a minimum of four hours of sunlight daily will shine on them. Generally, the more sun the better unless the temperatures soar, in which case roses benefit from afternoon shade. Roses need air circulation and space for their roots to grow without competition from neighboring trees, bushes, or other plants. I do my heavy pruning in January and February. This is also the best time to plant bare-root roses. In March, when the leaves are unfurling, I sprinkle alfalfa pellets around each plant as an organic, slow-release nutrient that breaks down with the rain or irrigation. At this time, apply a rose spray as a preventative measure to control blackspot, powdery mildew, and rust, following the directions. In spring and mid-summer, feed your roses with an organic fertilizer. Mulch with wood chips, shredded bark, redwood, or pine needles to improve the appearance of the beds. Mulch aids in retaining moisture, suppressing weeds, and stabilizing the plant. For pest control, let nature do its magic with the birds and bugs battling the bad actors. Deadheading is a must from May through December to maintain continuous flowering. This is the most arduous task because if deadheading is not maintained, rosehips form, and the flowering falters. Appropriate watering is essential. The soil needs to be moist but not soggy. Water deeply in the morning or evenings. Attend to con-



**The Gertrude Jekyll climbing rose showcases perfect rosette-shaped flowers on stems along a branch.**



**Boscobel David Austin rose is a healthy, upright shrub with a strong myrrh fragrance.**

tainer moisture requirements as pots dry out quickly in hot weather. From December to January, I allow the rosehips to form. Birds enjoy a winter feast. The cycle repeats when the heavy pruning begins.

May you enjoy showers of flowers on steroids this spring. Everything is coming up roses for me and I hope for you, too.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.