

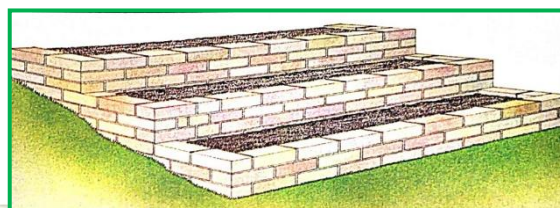
Miniature Roses in the Garden

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Miniature roses need to be well displayed to look their best, and can be grown in beds by themselves or be put into window boxes of pots. Miniature roses are thought to be related to the long-flowering China roses, and their Latin name is *Rosa Chinensis minima*.



They are sometimes referred to as Rouletii after a Dr. Roulet who found same, quite by chance growing in pots at a village called Onnens in Switzerland in 1918. Nobody remembered seeing anything like them before or could find out how they got there, though one theory is that they were a lost offspring of a much older French rose known as Pompon de Paris.

Yet another species name for the miniatures is *R. lawreceana*, after the 18th century writer on roses, Miss Molly Lawrence, and this multiplicity of names reflects the uncertainty as to where they really originated. However, they are first rate little plants, *R. rouletii* itself is only about 13 cm (5 in.) tall, with small, delicate rose-pink flowers.

In the true miniature rose, everything should be on the same scale. The flowers, the leaves and the stems should be in the same proportion to the rest of the plant as those on a hybrid tea or floribunda, but with a number of recent varieties, such as Gold Pin, this is not so. Miniatures are gaining in popularity all the time, particularly in the United States, and in the race for more and more novelties, a number of full-sized floribundas are being crossed with the miniatures, and the result is that the flowers are relatively too large for the plant. This does not always happen, but depends on which strain comes out on top in a particular cross.

This inter-breeding with Floribundas can have another effect, too, as seen in a rose such as Baby Masquerade, that will certainly reach 38 cm (15 in.) and sometimes more. The flowers and leaves are still small, duplicates of the Floribunda Masquerade on a tiny scale, but the whole plant in itself is not small as a miniature. In fact, though appearing in most nursery catalogues as a miniature Baby Masquerade is classed officially as a floribunda-dwarf.

One other thing can affect the size of miniature roses, and that is whether or not they are grown on their own roots. Miniatures take very easily from 8 cm (3 in.) cuttings, planted out in mid autumn (September), which is most useful if you want to increase your stock. Grown in this way, they make good, strong plants, but they will be considerably smaller than if they are budded onto a vigorous root-stock. They will be the size they should be, and the closer in their ancestry to the original *R. rouletii* the likelier they are to keep small.

Each leaflet on a miniature rose will probably be no more than 13 mm (1/2 in) long, the flowers no more than 3 cm (1 in.) in diameter. The blooms can be single or semi-double, but they can also be as packed with petals and as fully double and shapely as a hybrid tea. The minute blooms of Cinderella, for instance, have up to 60 petals, each as perfectly formed as a Baby's toenail.

Some miniatures are fragrant, though this only really becomes significant when they are grown in pots at eye-level. The colour range is as wide as for any other class of rose, and there is an extremely good selection of those in the mauve and lavender shades, like Lavender Lacc. They all last well in water.

Miniatures are, in the main, very rain-resistant and recurrent flowering, repeating quickly. They also flower early, and the first blooms will probably show colour in early summer (mid to late May). By this time the plants will be fully clothed with leaves, for these will start to develop in mid to late spring (February or March). In fact, in a mild winter, many miniatures are practically evergreen.

The health of these tiny roses is probably better than that of larger ones, due perhaps to the healthy China rose strain in their make-up, but such spraying as may be needed is very quick and easy. One or two squirts deal with each plant.

No real pruning is needed, but with some varieties there is so much growth that the shoots can become rather congested and will benefit from thinning out in early spring. Otherwise it is simply a matter of removing, as and when necessary, the small number of twigs that may die back each year, and perhaps having to shorten the odd vagrant, extra-vigorous growth that throws things out of balance. It is easier to use sharp scissors rather than secateurs for thinning.

Growing outdoors

There are many attractive ways of growing miniature roses in the garden, but probably the way that most people see them first is when they are sold as pot plants in shops and garden centers. This has given rise to the myth that they are pot plants for the house, not suitable for growing out of doors, and that they are more delicate than other roses. They are, in fact, every bit as tough, and are sold in pots because they are small and easy to alive indefinitely, unlike bare-root roses.

Miniatures are not house plants. If they are kept indoors all the time, the dry air will cause the leaves to drop, and the plant will be weakened. Bring the roses into the house when they are coming into flower, and take them out again immediately afterwards. Stand them in a spot shaded from the midday sun, or plunge the pots into damp ashes or peat, and keep them well watered at all times. Leave them out of doors for the winter, or they can be.

Brought into a cool greenhouse in late autumn (October), When slight heat (and good top ventilation) applied in spring will bring them into flower in late spring (April) or even a week or two earlier. After this stand them out of doors once more to build up their strength again in their natural environment.

For the rockery

They make excellent rockery plants, but they must have reasonably large pockets of good soil, 30 cm (12 in.) deep at least, for they will not thrive on the starvation diet that suits some rock plants. On a rockery, they are likely to have good drainage, which they like, and the big stones will give them a cool root-run, which they possibly like even more. One rose on its own may look a little lost on a big rockery but groups of three or four together make a good show.

As edging -If you are looking for something with which to edge your rose beds and give you early – or fairly early – colour, miniature roses can be the answer. The important thing to remember here is that they need sun to give of their best, so that the other roses must be far enough back from the border edge not to overshadow them. You can use miniatures, too, for edging paths, but for something as wide as a drive, it is probably best to plant some of the taller-growing, stronger-coloured of the miniature varieties. Orange –salmon Corain or Yellow Rosina would be suitable. These roses look well in front of other shrub plantings.

In raised beds, if you do want to smell you roses and appreciate the tiny beauty of their individual blooms as well, grow them in raised stone sink at least 30-38 cm (12-15 in.) deep, perhaps placing it on a patio or using it as a backing for a garden seat. As an

alternative, try long, narrow, terraced beds, built up with dry stone walling or brick, and planted entirely with miniatures, each bed rising one tier above the last and perhaps planted with a contrasting colour. This is a good way to use a bank where the garden changes its level, but drainage in both a properly-constructed sink or on terracing is likely to be better than roses like, so water regularly.

Some varieties to choose

DWARF

Baby Gold Star	Yellow, flushed apricot
Colibri	Orange – yellow, Flushed pink
Frosty	white
Humpty Dumpty	Carmine-pink
Lavender Lace	lavender-mauve
Pixie	white, tinted pink
Pour Toi	creamy-yellow
Peon (Tom Thumb)	Crimson, white centre
Simple Simon	deep pink
Toy Clown	white, edged pink
Yellow Doll	yellow

TALLER

Cinderella	Shell-pink
Coralin	orange-salmon
Little Flirt	flame-yellow, red Reverse
Maid Marion	scarlet
Oakington Ruby	Crimson
Perle Montserrat	rose-pink
Rosina	golden-yellow
Starina	red, flushed gold, Carmine reverse

Miniature rose garden

Each of the terraces described above will form a complete miniature rose bed, but it is possible to try something even more ambitious than this-a complete miniature rose garden. For these there are nowadays not only bush varieties but miniature standards and climbers, though both the latter tend to be on the large side. In America, even miniature moss roses have been developed.

Mark out the beds in whatever pattern and to whatever size takes your fancy or that you have room for, but remember that miniature roses are relatively expensive in comparison to their larger relatives and that you will not need more than about 20 cm (8 in.) between each bush. A bed 1.2 x 1.2m (4 x 4 ft.) may not seem large, but it would take about 36 of the smaller-growing miniature roses, that are the best for this kind of planting.

You should not need to double dig the ground. In time, miniature rose roots can go quite deep, but not as deep as this. However, the soil should be well broken-up to a depth of 30-38 cm (12-15 in.), and some fertilizer added before planting.

Paths between the beds can be either very narrow, to be in proportion to the roses, or as wide as an ordinary garden path, so that you can stroll along them more easily. The wider paths, if they are of grass, can be easily cut with a lawn-mower. Narrow grass ones may create problems in keeping them neat, and the grass itself, if it is anything other than very closely shaved, may actually look out of scale with roses. Nothing looks better than grass for surrounding rose beds, but this is one case where small paving stones or fine gravel (contained within thin, damp-proofed, wooden edging) may be the most practical solution, and is a very good second best. A paved, sunken garden of miniature roses makes a most pleasing feature for any garden.

The following selection of varieties is divided into the dwarf and the taller-growing kinds. Dwarf here means about 15-20 cm (6-8 in.) and taller means 23-25 cm (9-10 in.), but remember that height will depend a lot on the conditions in which the roses are grown.

Dwarf

Miniature roses				
				
All a Twitter	Baby Paradise	Be My Baby	Cutie Pie	
				
Gourmet Popcorn	Deja Blu	Candy	Italian Ice	
				
Life's Little Pleasure	Meibenbino	The Fairy	Pretty Polly Lavender	
				
Sweet Drift	You 're The One	Sunmaid	Baby Gold Star	
				
Colibri	Frosty	Humpty Dumpty	Lavender lace	
				
Pixie	Pour Toi	Peon or Tom Thumb	Toy Clown	Yellow Doll



Tall

			
Cindrella	Coralin	Little Flirt	Maid Marion
			
Oakington Ruby	Perle de Montserrat	Rosina	Starina