

Rose Diseases and Prevention

One of the most gratifying gardening accomplishments can be measured in the successful cultivation of a healthy rose with high quality and abundant flowers. Disease identification and control practices should ensure your plants are given the best chance to thrive.

Some of the most prevalent diseases affecting roses in Oklahoma are black spot, powdery mildew, rose rosette disease and crown gall. Careful selection of resistant cultivars is the first step in preventing disease, although no cultivar is resistant to all disease. Consult [OSU Extension fact sheet EPP- 7607](#) for a list of cultivars resistant to fungal diseases, black spot and powdery mildew. Additionally, frequent foliar applications of fungicide help deter fungal infections in susceptible cultivars.



Cultural and Chemical Controls

In addition to proper cultivar selection, proper cultivation, sanitation and watering practices can also help prevent disease:

- Allow proper ventilation among plantings, ensure good drainage
- Avoid overhead watering to prevent fungal spore germination on wet leaf surfaces
- When pruning, sanitize tools with 10% bleach solution between cuts to prevent spread of disease.
- Continuously remove and destroy any diseased leaves or twigs to curb reinfection.
- Weekly application of fungicide targeting black spot and powdery mildew from new growth in the spring through fall should mitigate spread and severity.

Common Rose Diseases in Oklahoma

Observe your roses often for foliar problems, disease progression and insect activity. Knowing which disease agents may be present will dictate the treatment program.

Powdery mildew (*Sphaerotheca pannosa*)

- Coats all plant parts with white, powdery substance
- Causes leaf curl, leaf drop, plant and bud stunting
- Occurs in varying temperatures, but most active in 80°F temperatures, with 97-100% humidity.
- Requires cultural and chemical intervention

Black spot

- Begins with small circular spots on leaves, that may merge into larger, irregularly shaped lesions
- Leaves turn yellow and drop, plant may completely defoliate and die
- Requires cultural and chemical intervention

Rose Rosette and Rose Mosaic Viral Infections

- Caused by propagation and insect feeding.
- Rose Mosaic: Infected plant leaves exhibit yellow mosaic patterns
- Rose Rosette: Reddish, deformed leaf growth, excessive thorning.
- No cure; requires removal and destruction of plants.
- Info on Rosette: [EPP-7329, "Rose Rosette Disease"](#)

Crown gall (*Agrobacterium tumefaciens*)

- Caused by bacterial infection
- Outgrowths of varying sizes appear at crown, roots and aerial parts, and grow larger as disease progresses
- Immediate sanitary removal of diseased parts, sanitize tools, replace soil.

With keen observation, cultural and chemical controls and a maintenance plan, rose cultivation may become your new labor of love. For additional disease information and control methods, consult and bookmark [OSU Extension fact sheet EPP- 7607, "Diseases of Roses"](#).

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Resources:

[Roses in Oklahoma: HLA-6403](#)

[Rose Rosette Disease](#)

[Diseases of Roses: EPP-7607](#)

[Oklahoma Gardening: Rose Rosette Update](#)