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*great gardens*

# *A Rose Lover's Retreat*



PHOTOS: Courtesy of Teresa Byington



Ready to take the plunge with roses?  
Learn this gardener's secrets.

# A Rose Lover's Retreat



Endless Summer  
Twist-n-Shout™ bigleaf  
hydrangea

1 | A generous border shows off roses and bigleaf hydrangeas that are spaced a couple feet apart to provide good air circulation.

## Botanical Names

Bigleaf hydrangea  
*Hydrangea  
macrophylla*

Rose  
*Rosa* spp.  
and hybrids

Roses can be intimidating. So much so that many gardeners don't even bother growing them. But Teresa Byington wants you to know that their persnickety reputation is not deserved. She is a master gardener and an active member of the American Rose Society (currently serving as editor of the ARS national newsletter, *Roses and You*). In addition, she is the vice president of the Indianapolis Rose Society, serves as a juror at the Biltmore International Rose Trials and is co-host of the *Rose Chat* podcast.

Teresa's 1-acre cottage garden in Indianapolis weaves together her love of roses and other perennials and shrubs, such as the bigleaf hydrangeas in photo 1. She believes that every gardener wants to grow roses, but perhaps they've tried a rose that didn't do well or they've heard that roses can be fussy divas so never gave them a try. Teresa says that although roses have a rich, colorful and interesting heritage, the future is also bright: "We have fabulous hybridizers working very hard to bring us beautiful and fragrant roses that thrive with sustainable growing practices. I am a cheerleader for roses!"



2 | **Pretty posies** A handful of 'Felicite Parmentier' and 'Quietness' roses greets visitors to the garden.

**ROSE ROMANCE** Teresa's love affair with roses began with a bouquet she received as a teenager: "I come from a long line of gardeners and already loved gardening," she says, "but didn't even know such beautiful roses could be grown in your backyard. It was love at first sight. I knew then I wanted to have a rose garden someday and share bouquets with others." (Teresa is well known among her friends and family for her posies like the one in photo 2.)

**GETTING STARTED** So, 35 years ago, after Teresa and her woodworking-hobbyist husband,



'New Dawn'  
climbing rose

Sweet Drift®  
ground cover rose

**3 | Up, up and away** Between the compact pink Sweet Drift ground cover roses along a pathway and 'New Dawn' climbing rose on an arbor and gate, guests are enveloped in fragrance and blossoms.

Greg, built their dream house, Teresa's head was spinning with ideas for her dream cottage garden. Today her garden is a series of beds and borders accented with a series of trellises, fencing and raised beds that Greg constructed. He also built the arbor you see in photo 3. Roses selected for their hardiness and disease resistance are the common denominator throughout. After decades of successfully growing roses in her zone 5 garden, Teresa is eager to share some of the lessons she's learned.

**LOOK FOR INSPIRATION** For design inspiration, Teresa suggests gathering images of other gardens and plant combinations that appeal to you. "It all starts with a dream," she says, "so create an inspiration board. There's no reason to completely reinvent the wheel." (Teresa keeps her mood board in the potting shed you see in photo 4.) When you're ready, put your plan on paper, even if it's a simple sketch. "It helps you avoid some pitfalls," she says, like placing a too-short plant behind a taller one or not considering a plant's mature size. "Graph paper is one of my best garden tools."



**4 | A place to putter** Teresa's 8x12-foot shed serves as a garden library and office all year-round, but it becomes her refuge in the winter months.

# A Rose Lover's Retreat continued



'Mother of Pearl'  
grandiflora rose

'The Faun'  
floribunda rose

**5 | Shades of pink** 'Mother of Pearl' and 'The Faun' roses surround the 22x15-foot flagstone patio, where Teresa can survey almost the entire garden. "It's the perfect place to start your day," she says.

## Botanical Names

Rose  
*Rosa* spp.  
and hybrids  
Sweet bay magnolia  
*Magnolia*  
*virginiana*

Teresa has some considerations to keep in mind before you get started. To grow beautiful roses, she says the first thing to do is to assess your garden's growing conditions. Most traditional roses need at least six hours of sun a day to bloom their best, but some modern shrub roses can grow well in part shade.

**SOIL SCIENCE** She suggests employing a soil test. Your county extension office can help connect you with a service to do this. Request a report that interprets the results and makes recommendations to correct any problems. Roses grow best with a soil pH of 6 to 6.5. Adding plenty of organic matter is always a good idea, and your soil test will tell you if you need to add anything else, such as sand, for better drainage.

**PLANTING POCKETS** It's also important to know your garden's USDA cold-hardiness zone and look for roses that will thrive where you live. Does your property contain any microclimates? A microclimate is a typically small area



**6 | Roses for sharing** Teresa hosts "Bokay Days" and friends can drop by and pick up a bouquet.

that is consistently warmer or cooler than the surrounding areas. It is created by sun, shade, wind and proximity to bodies of water. Gardeners who know their microclimates can push the limits of their hardiness zone and install plants

PHOTO: Courtesy of Teresa Byington (6)



**7 | Proper potting station** Teresa thinks it's important to include places like this potting bench (she calls it "Thyme Out") to allow yourself to be creative.

that will thrive in a specific area, like along the side of a house or around the patio in photo 5. A single property may have several.

Teresa uses these microclimates as a hospital for roses that are doing poorly or for roses she wants to test before planting them in their final homes. "I grew 'Wollerton Old Hall', a David Austin rose, in a container for two years before I moved it into the garden," she says.

**PROPER MOISTURE** Roses love regular watering (1 to 2 inches a week during the growing season) but appreciate good drainage. Since they do best with uniform moisture, mulch helps. It also helps to suppress weeds. Wood chips,

straw or dry grass clippings all work well. Instead of underplanting her roses, Teresa adds a layer of mulch a couple of inches deep around her roses.

**PAY ATTENTION** Visit your roses often to become familiar with them and to catch any problems early. Teresa encourages rose lovers to continue learning by reading books and magazines like *Garden Gate*. "I also recommend following gardeners you admire on social media and joining a local garden club or rose society. But most of all," she adds, "have fun! Enjoy the process of growing roses and make it your own."



## GARDEN AT A GLANCE

The cottage garden sits behind the house on a 1-acre property that has evolved into a series of beds and borders surrounding a flagstone patio and accented with custom wooden fences and structures.

## A Rose Lover's Retreat *continued*

**T**eresa is quick to sing the praises of modern shrub roses. “I love all roses,” she says, “but grow mostly old garden roses and power-blooming shrub roses that are in the easy-care category. Hybrid teas and diva roses from the ’80s gave me fits—they are prone to disease, and the lack of winter hardiness dimmed their beautiful light.” Today, she enjoys them in other people’s gardens. “But I’m always looking for my next favorite rose and get completely giddy each year when it is time for the new plant releases.”

**ROSES WITH A STORY** That being said, Teresa also has a special fondness for legacy roses. “Roses have some of the best backstories in the plant kingdom,” she says. “It is a great day when I get to share the stories of the roses in my garden.” Among her favorites is the double soft pink shrub rose ‘Quietness’, one of the last roses bred by Griffith Buck at Iowa State University for increased cold hardiness and named in honor of those who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001. Another is ‘Peggy Martin’, a classic old Southern climbing rose named for an avid Louisiana gardener whose home and property stood under 20 feet of brackish water for two weeks after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. This tough-as-nails beauty that Peggy had acquired through passalong cuttings from friends in New Orleans managed to survive and was named in her honor.

**THERE'S A ROSE FOR THAT** The many types of roses available offer selections for almost any situation. Hybrid tea, floribunda and grandiflora roses have traditionally been the most commonly planted types. But these require some maintenance (pruning, fertilizing) to keep them healthy. The new generation of shrub roses (like Knock Out® and Easy Elegance® series), however, require little or no pest control. Once they are established they grow and flower for years with almost no maintenance. “I like a rose that can get a hug from another plant without pouting or breaking out in a flurry of blackspot,” Teresa says. Find a handful of her favorite roses in the gallery at right.



- A Darcey Bussell** Shrub; lightly fragrant crimson-pink blossoms from spring into fall; 4 ft. tall and wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 5 to 9
- B Sweet Drift®** Ground cover; clusters of pink blossoms from spring into fall; 1 to 2 ft. tall, 2 to 3 ft. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 4 to 11
- C Golden Fairy Tale** Hybrid tea; clusters of fragrant double yellow blooms from spring into fall; 3 to 4 ft. tall and wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 5 to 9
- D ‘Quietness’** Shrub; double soft pink blossoms with richer centers and light fragrance from spring into fall; 4 to 6 ft. tall, 3 to 4 ft. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 5 to 9
- E ‘Veilchenblau’** Climbing; large clusters of small, cupped, fragrant purple-pink (fades to lilac-pink) blossoms with white centers in spring; 10 to 15 ft. tall, 4 to 10 ft. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 5 to 10
- F Champagne Wishes** Shrub; clusters of soft apricot double blooms that fade to white from spring into fall; 3 to 4 ft. tall, 2 to 3 ft. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 4 to 7
- G Music Box** Shrub; double pink fragrant blossoms with creamy yellow centers from spring into fall; 3 to 5 ft. tall and wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 4 to 9
- H ‘Poseidon’** Floribunda; lavender-blue cupped, fragrant double blossoms from spring into fall; 3 to 4 ft. tall, 2 to 3 ft. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 5 to 10
- I ‘Peggy Martin’** Climbing; clusters of fragrant pink blossoms with white overtones from spring into fall; 6 to 15 ft. tall, 12 to 15 ft. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 4 to 9

### Sources

**Heirloom Roses**  
heirloomroses.com  
800-820-0465

**High Country Roses**  
highcountryroses.com  
800-552-2082

**Jackson and Perkins**  
jacksonandperkins.com  
866-391-8219





'Petit Pink'  
shrub rose

**8 | Welcome to the herb garden** A pair of compact pink shrub roses greets visitors to the 16x18-foot herb garden. “Even before the plants were purchased and planted,” says Teresa, “the fence and gate were in place. This continues to be a favorite spot for me.”

## A Rose Lover's Retreat *continued*

### Botanical Names

Clematis  
*Clematis* spp.  
and hybrids  
Mealycup sage  
*Salvia farinacea*  
Tomato  
*Solanum*  
*lycopersicum*  
Zucchini  
*Cucurbita pepo*

Teresa started the garden with a backyard herb garden. “All my favorite garden books were filled with herbs and roses and there were always defined spaces and beautiful structures,” she says. “So, to me the little herb garden was the perfect place to start.”

In addition to the garden you see in photo 8, Teresa has made room in her backyard for raised beds and generous planters for growing vegetables, flowers for cutting and, of course, more roses. The tomatoes are a team effort. Teresa’s “job” is to propagate the seeds of her husband’s prized hard-to-find tomatoes and plant them out in containers once the temperatures warm up. After that, the tomatoes are entirely his responsibility. “He takes it from there and tends to

them every day,” Teresa says. “He gives me the side eye if I start to mess with them once they are planted.” The planters you see in photo 9 are on castors that make it easier to move them around for care and maintenance—and to follow the sun when necessary.

**GOOD NEIGHBORS** When considering companion plants for roses, look for those with similar growing needs (such as water and light requirements) and select ones with various bloom times for an extended season of beauty. Teresa believes in planting a variety of companions for your roses in order to create a healthy ecosystem that attracts “good bugs” to the garden to help control the “bad bugs.” She’s also sure to include partners with blossoms she can



**9 | Keep on rolling** Tomatoes and zucchini are grown in containers placed on plant stands with castors so they can be moved for adequate sun.

use in her bouquets. But Teresa is quick to mention that roses require good circulation in order to avoid fungal diseases so she leaves at least a foot or two between plants. “Roses love companions,” she says, “but it is best not to have too much directly under them as it impedes care and cuts down on air circulation.”

So, if you’re looking to add a rose or two to your landscape, take a cue from Teresa and be sure to give them room to grow. “One of my greatest challenges in my 35-year-old garden,” she says, “is making room for more roses while maintaining a pleasing garden design.”

—James A. Baggett

A friend once told James that no garden is complete without a rose called ‘The Fairy,’ so he’s grown one in his garden ever since.

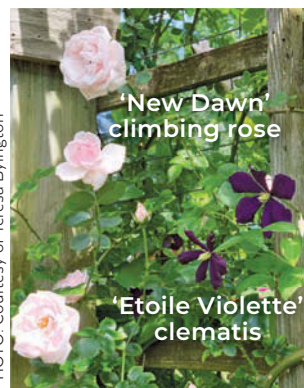


PHOTO: Courtesy of Teresa Byington

## Rose Companions

Good partner plants for roses are those that hide their bare legs and also act as living mulches — suppressing weeds and lightly shading the soil, keeping rose roots nice and cool. Here are three of Teresa’s favorite companion plants for her roses.

**Salvia** *Salvia x sylvestris* ‘May Night’ Perennial; tall spikes of deep violet flowers in late spring to early summer contrast beautifully with billowing roses; full sun to shade; 18 to 24 in. tall, 15 to 18 in. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 4 to 9

**Clematis** *Clematis* ‘Etoile Violette’ Vine; masses of dark violet-purple blooms from summer into fall are the perfect companion for climbing roses; full sun to part shade; 10 to 12 ft. tall, 3 to 6 ft. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8

**Sweet William** *Dianthus barbatus* Perennial; red, pink, white, purple and bicolor flowers with fringed petals add color from spring into summer; full sun to part shade; 12 to 24 in. tall, 6 to 12 in. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9