

Quick 12-Rose Bed

by Baxter Williams

That's it! No more Mr. Niceguy! When Neighbor Bob built his Wife-Jane a rose bed last Winter you expected that you would have to listen to Bob talk about his flowers. But now this! There are a dozen of the most-beautiful roses you have even seen, and Bob is standing in your kitchen explaining his satisfaction at such floricultural perfection. You can't just do nothing. But where to begin? How soon can you match Bob's successes? The answer--right away!

A very simply-constructed bed for a dozen large (not miniature) roses is shown below. With materials and soil on-hand, it is possible to construct this bed in about an hour. It could even be planted in just two hours, although it would be better to let the soil age for a week or two, if it is not already pre-aged.

Framing is simplified greatly by using landscape timbers of only three lengths: full 8-foot, 5-foot + two timber widths, and 5-foot. And fastening of the timbers is made easy by drilling half of the holes' depth and then driving nails the rest of the way.

Construction and placement comments:

1. **Ideally** the bed will be placed in full, all day sunlight; and north-south orientation is best.
2. Timbers should be **pressure**-treated, rather than just dipped or sprayed.
3. Level the ground underneath the **timbers only** using sand. Do not strip up the grass; do not run the tiller; do not dig any holes; do not spend any time at the chiropractor's office. Place newsprint 8 sheets thick inside frame to kill grass.
4. Bed dimensions allow cutting of only end timbers. Cut the 5-ft pieces first; three are required. The other three end pieces are cut to be 5-ft + two timber widths (almost 6-ft in length).
5. Using a **long** 3/16 in. dia. drillbit, predrill the top two layers of timbers, and then drive "60d" galvanized nails into the timbers below. A heavy hammer works best.

6. Load the bed with 2.63 cu. yds (71 cu ft) of rose-growing soil mix. It should be heaped into the bed to about 4 in. above the top of the timbers; it will settle after planting and watering. 13 cu. ft of mulch is necessary.
7. Plant your roses 30-in. apart across the bed, and 31-in. apart length-wise.
8. A soil mix can be made of one-third by volume of sharp sand, and top soil, and rotted manure (or other composted material).
9. Note: A **single-row** bed for 12 roses uses 27 timbers that are 36-in. apart (only three timbers are necessary to make both ends). 48 nails would be required. 3.31 cu yds (89.4 cu. ft) of soil would be used, and 16 cu. ft of mulch.

