



UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

# Agriculture & Natural Resources

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION • YOLO COUNTY

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## Methods of Preserving Roses

Drying roses is a great way to preserve their beauty long after the season has ended for beautiful looking blooms. There are various methods of preserving roses that will continue to highlight their beauty year round. Dried roses can be used at weddings, special holidays, and for a variety of beautiful craft items.

### PREFERRED VARIETIES FOR DRYING

*Dark Red:* Black Jade, Don Juan, Dolly Parton, Olympiad, Christian Dior.

*Pink:* Perfume Delight, Miss All American Beauty, Pink Peace, Dainty Bess, Prima Donna, Queen Elizabeth, Simplicity, Tiffany.

*Orange:* Impatient, Fragrant Cloud, Starina, Brandy, Margo Koster, Orange Sunblaze.

*Color Blends:* Color Magic, Cary Grant, Double Delight, Purple Tiger, Nicole, Jean Kenneally.

### METHODS FOR DRYING ROSES

One of the secrets to drying roses is to dry them as quickly as possible. Selecting only the best blooms will insure the perfect dried roses. Be sure to pick your roses on dry days and preferably in the mid-morning hours. Avoid roses that have disease. All the lower leaves from the stems should be removed. The following drying methods will give you beautiful preserved roses.

**Air Drying:** Prepared rose stems should be fastened in small bunches with rubber bands. Avoid, as much as possible, contact between individual flower heads. Hang the rose bunches upside down in a dry, dark, warm area. They can be hung from your kitchen ceiling or a closet. An outdoor trellis is an excellent location for drying roses. Time for air drying may vary, but usually flowers will be dry within 5-10 days.

**Silica Gel Drying:** Silica gel extracts moisture from the flowers, which results in superb dried blooms. Silica gel can be purchased from a craft or nursery supply store. The advantage of using silica is that it can be used over and over again, making the cost reasonable over time. To reactivate the gel after original use, place it in a baking tin on a low temperature (200 degrees) oven for about an hour. Using a plastic shoebox-sized Tupperware, fill with silica gel and place the roses such that they are covered halfway. Once the roses are positioned in the gel, then silica gel should be carefully added until the blooms are covered completely. Be sure to keep the rose flowers separated from each other in the box. After 3 to 5 days tip your Tupperware container on edge to reveal the dried roses. Very carefully lift the dried blooms out with a small spoon. To preserve the rose bloom color, spray your blooms with an inexpensive hair spray or spray sealer from a craft store.

**Electric Dehydrator:** Using a food dehydrator works very well for rose drying when the temperature is set between 95 to 100 degrees. Place fresh roses on racks; do not allow blooms to come in contact with one another. Run the dehydrator for 8 to 24 hours, depending on size of bloom. The blooms will shrink about 50% and the color will change more than with the silica gel method.

**Microwave Drying:** To dry roses with the microwave, place your roses loosely between paper towels and dry for one or two minutes, then cool. It is very important to always place a cup of water in the microwave when drying roses. Only a few roses at a time should be dried with this method. Roses may lose their color or become very brittle and hard to handle.

The results from these various methods of drying roses will reward you with beautiful dried flowers that can be used in a variety of craft items. Just let your artistic imagination run wild.

*By Albert Crepeau, Yolo County Master Gardener*

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