Try a “Mini” for Valentine’s Day!

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Valentine’s Day will soon be here and of course, everyone tends to think of a dozen long-stemmed roses. But, this Valentine’s Day break out of your rut and try a miniature rose! This small, compact plant will not only please your recipient on Valentine’s Day, but can also become a part of their summer garden.

Miniature roses are much like larger roses – only miniature. They have smaller flowers, smaller leaves and yes, smaller thorns. Miniature roses are available in a variety of colors – blue, green, yellow, orange, pink, red, and white. Flower forms include single, double, or semi-double flowers. Fragrances vary from slight to intense. And yes, they range in size from 3 to 18 inches tall. There are also climbing varieties reaching up to 5 feet tall and others that sprawl across the ground making a good ground cover.

Miniature roses need direct sun and when indoors should be placed in a south or west window. They prefer temperatures of 70°F in the daytime and a minimum of 60°F at nighttime. They don’t like cold drafts or excess heat.

Your “mini” requires a consistent moisture supply and should be fertilized once or twice monthly with a dilute fertilizer solution. To promote new growth and blooms, remove faded flowers, cutting the stem just above the uppermost five-leaflet leaf. Also, remove any yellow leaves and dead growth.

You will want to inspect the miniature rose occasionally for pests, such as spider mites. Discolored leaves and fine webbing are common signs of spider mites.
Finally, you can place your miniature rose outdoors in May, using care to harden and acclimate the plant to the outdoors. Once adjusted, the potted plant may be placed in the sun on your patio or deck. But, if you don’t want to bother with a potted plant, plant your “mini” in the garden. Although small - miniature roses are remarkably cold-hardy and can be over-wintered by completely covering the plant with soil.

And for some trivia – fossils from Europe, Asia and North America indicate that roses have been around for 30 million years. Wealthy Romans used rose petals to carpet their floors, beds and perfume their bath water. Roses were also important in political circles. When a rose was hung from the ceiling of a political meeting, all were vowed to secrecy.

Today, the rose is a common symbol of beauty, love and romance. So, if you really want to “wow” your partner, give them a “mini” AND enjoy a delicious ribeye steak dinner for two! Happy Valentine’s Day!!

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