

## Re-plant disease:

Replant disease refers to the problem of re-establishing plants in soil where the same species was previously grown. Roses are probably the most commonly-known example, but there are actually many species of tree and shrub which are susceptible, including: Apple, Pear, Peach, Plum and Quince.

Typically the new plant will survive the first year or two, but fail to thrive, before eventually dying. The roots of the previous plant need only to have been in the soil for a few months for the problem to occur.

The exact cause is still not properly understood. One school of thought is that it is a naturally defense mechanism to stop seedlings from a fallen rose hip or apple eventually smothering the mother plant.

However it is also possible that it is a general build up of pests and pathogens in the soil during the life of the original plant, which the mature plant can withstand but will attack the roots of the young plant.

The traditional way to overcome this was to swap the soil with fresh soil from another part of the garden. The soil should be removed to make a planting hole that is about 60cm (2ft) diameter and at least 30cm (1ft) deep. This is also the time to incorporate well-rotted manure or home-made compost. It's a good idea at this stage to 'wash' the hole with a solution of Jeye's Fluid (40ml per 5 litres of water), to

kill and lingering blackspot or mildew spores. Don't forget to firm the soil back down well after planting.



Mycorrhizal products such as Rootgrow have recently appeared on the market and claim to be effective in counteracting replant problems. These usually come in a sachet and can be sprinkled into the planting hole. In our experience, they do help the new plant establish well, but we still prefer a belt and braces approach and would use these products as well as using fresh soil as outlined above.

