



PRUNING ROSES

MESA-EAST VALLEY ROSE SOCIETY

WHY DO WE PRUNE ROSES?

The real reason for pruning is to cut back the size and number of canes to produce the highest quality of blooms. A rose bush will come out of dormancy with a certain amount of stored energy. If the energy is directed to a few bud eyes then the resulting stems will be longer and the blooms larger. The bush will also direct some of the energy toward producing highly prized new basal canes. These are the canes growing directly from the bud union, thereby supplying new wood on an annual basis that produce the best blooms. A rose left unpruned will still continue to grow and bloom, though its stems will be short and the flowers small.

The most desirable bush form is an urn or vase, where canes grow from the bud union like spokes of a wheel, outward and upward around an open center. The perfect shape is sometimes hard to achieve, but you can work toward that end by removing canes that grow straight up through the center of the bush and those that grow into the center. Prune to achieve plant balance.

WHEN TO PRUNE

Roses don't truly go dormant in our climate, but they do need to rest in order to store up sugars and starches needed to produce spring growth. The ideal time for pruning is late December thru February. If you prune earlier you run the risk of frost damage. It takes approximately 70 - 85 days for the bush to turn around.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Good leather gloves (Protection for the arms is a must.)

Pruning shears (Bypass blades - others will crush the canes.)

Lopping Shears (These are great for older woodier canes.)

Pruning saw (This blade is narrow and allows you to get into smaller areas to prune.)

Wire brush (Use this to remove leaves and debris from the bud union. This also encourages new basal breaks.)

Elmer's wood glue (Use this to seal any cane 1/4 inch or larger.) This will prevent cane borers.

A container of alcohol or bleach (1 part bleach to 8 parts water) to dip shears in when cutting diseased canes.

TYPES OF PRUNING

LIGHT PRUNING

Remove about 1/3 of the bush. This will result in a larger bush with more blooms on shorter, smaller stems. This is good for floribundas, shrubs, and hedge roses.

MODERATE PRUNING

The canes should be pruned to one-half the bush. Leave 6 to 10 canes. This will produce a larger bush and ample blooms. This method is best for the average garden.

HEAVY PRUNING

Leave 3 or 4 canes. The canes will produce a few large long-stemmed blooms of show quality.

HYBRID TEAS

Always cut 1/4 inch above an outward facing bud eye. Cut at a 45 degree angle, sloping down. This will allow excess sap to run down the opposite side of the cut. Prune any canes growing into the center of the bush or crossing other canes. Prune out any dead wood. Remove any twiggy growth. When older canes fail to produce good blooms, remove them by cutting them back to the bud union. Remove any suckers. Suckers

come from below the bud union and should be removed at anytime during the season. Leave 4 to 8 good healthy canes. Remove 1/3 to 1/2 of the bush.

FLORIBUNDA

Floribundas are pruned a little differently from hybrid teas. The bushes are more compact and usually are grown for the mass effect of the flowers. The canes are smaller and will have more twiggy growth. Leave 8 to 12 healthy canes, cut out all crossing canes and any dead or diseased wood. Prune about 1/3 of the bush.

GRANDIFLORAS

Grandifloras are pruned like hybrid teas.

MINIATURES

Miniatures should be pruned like the other roses. Cut back 1/3 to 1/2 of the bush.

SHRUBS

Prune only to shape new shrubs, otherwise they should be pruned like the Floribunda. Remove crossing canes and twiggy growth, and any dead wood. Cut back about 1/3 of the bush.

CLIMBERS

Climbers should be pruned to fit trellises, walls, or fences. These roses bloom on one or two year old wood. Climbers may be pruned during the dormant season or in the late spring, after flowering. Remove any dead or diseased wood. Remove the weakest new canes, then cut other canes back to 8 to 10 bud eyes on the laterals that bore flowers the past year. The best blooms are on laterals growing from two to three year wood. Retain 5 to 6 canes. The long canes should be trained by arching or tying them in a horizontal position. This induces every bud to produce a flowering branch.

ALBAS, CENTIFOLIAS, GALLICAS, HYBRID PERPETUALS AND NOISETTES

Prune in the spring. Cut the wood back by about 1/4 of the bush. Cut out any dead or diseased wood. Thin out canes if needed to shape the bush.

DAMASK, TEAS, CHINAS, BOURBONS, PORTLANDS

Cut out any dead or diseased wood. Prune lightly, only to shape the bush.

CONTAINER GROWN ROSES

These roses should be pruned just like those grown in the ground.

PRUNING TIPS

Remove all leaves from each bush.

Clean all debris from around the bush.

Seal all canes larger than the size of a pencil. This will prevent cane borers.

Spray the canes and the soil around the bush with a combination fungicide and insecticide. This will kill any powdery mildew spores or insects in the soil.

If you are pruning a diseased bush, always clean your shears with a ten percent bleach solution to prevent spreading the disease.

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