

Ten Steps to Beautiful Roses - Pruning

Why Prune?

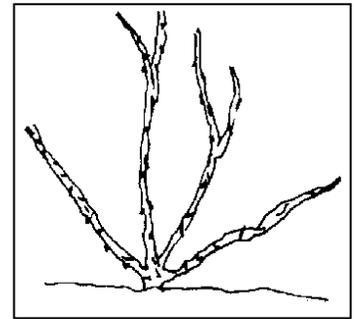
Annual pruning makes larger flowers and invigorates plant and shoot growth. Pruning improves plant shape and appearance and removes dead and diseased canes. Pruning triggers new buds to push at the base so new canes can form.

When to Prune?

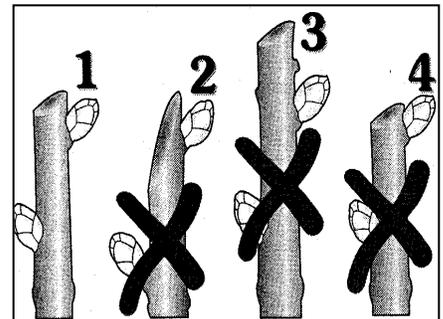
Most roses should be pruned when they are dormant. In the Central Valley roses are generally dormant between New Year's Day and Valentine's Day.

How to Prune?

1. Use sharp, clean, by-pass pruning shears, long-handled lopping shears and gloves to protect your hands from the thorns.
2. Cut off the top 1/3 of the old plant growth to better see the plant structure.
3. Remove small twiggy growth and dead, diseased, or crossing canes.
4. Remove suckers (shoots that grow from the stem below the bud union) by digging down to where suckers start and pulling them off with a downward motion (if possible). Otherwise cut suckers off close to the stem.
5. Remove canes in the center of the plant to create a vase shape.
6. Choose 3-6 strong, healthy, outside canes per plant to keep and leave 3-5 buds on each cane. Undesirable canes have discolored pith or hollow centers indicating disease, insect or weather damage.
7. Since the new shoot will grow in the direction that the top bud points to, try to cut to an outside bud. Cut on the diagonal about ¼ inch above the bud (see figure). If cut closer the new growth can break off. If cut longer, an unsightly dying stub will remain.
8. Remove every leaf from the newly pruned bush as diseases and insects tend to carry over in old leaves. Clean all leaves and debris away from the base of the plant. If necessary, scrape scaly bark from the bud union and base of the plant.
9. Consider applying an insecticidal soap or horticultural oil after pruning and while roses are dormant. Soaps and oils smother overwintering scales and insect eggs and are least harmful to beneficial insects. A good time to apply is when no rain or fog is expected within a day.
10. Shape your rose bushes as they grow. Keep the branches balanced and the centers open and your rose bushes will be attractive garden shrubs.



Vase shape configuration



Proper pruning technique calls for the branch to be cut at an angle just above the bud, as in figure 1. Avoid common mistakes as: cutting the branch at too sharp an angle (fig. 2); cutting too high above the bud (fig. 3); and cutting too close to the bud (fig. 4).

Rose Care by the Month

Task	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Prune/remove leaves	x	x										x
Plant bareroot/transplant	x	x										x
Fertilize		x			x	x	x	x	x			
Deadhead					x	x	x	x	x			
Monitor for aphids & beetles			x	x	x							
Monitor for borers & scale	x	x		x								
Monitor for spider mites						x	x	x	x			
Monitor for black spot & rust		x	x	x								
Monitor for powdery mildew				x	x	x			x	x		

Aphids like rapidly growing tissue, such as buds and shoots. A strong spray of water early in the day knocks them off the plant. Aphids are a favorite food of many beneficial insects, so try to avoid insecticides. Heavy aphid infestation can lead to honeydew and sooty mold. Control ants because they feed on honeydew and keep beneficial insects away from the aphids.

Beetles-Fuller rose beetles chew flowers and foliage leaving a ragged edge; they are ¼" long, pale brown and hide under leaves. Hoplia beetles chew holes in flower petals; they are brown ¼" long and occur once a year. Cut off infested blooms and handpick the beetles. . Rose curculios are small red to black ¼" long beetles that chew holes in flowers and stems; their small white larvae feed in buds. Handpick adults and dispose of damaged buds.

Black Spot-Look for black spots on upper surfaces of leaves, which are caused by a fungus that requires free water to grow. Provide good air circulation around plants. Remove fallen leaves.

Borers-Look for tiny worm-like larvae or entry holes on young canes or those recently cut. Cut out and destroy affected canes.

Bristly Roseslugs are the green-yellow larvae of sawflies; they are 3/4" long, may be bristly, and chew holes in leaves so that only a skeleton of the leaf remains. Clip off infested foliage, beneficial insects usually keep them under control.

Deadheading is the removal of spent blooms and allows the plant to channel its energy into producing new blooms. Cut the spent blossom back to the nearest five leaflets where the stem is about as thick as a pencil. Make sure the swollen bud (on which the new flower stem will grow) points to the outside of the bush.

Fertilize-New roses: Scatter ½ cup super phosphate or bone meal in bottom of planting hole. Established roses: Apply a complete fertilizer like 15-15-15 in February; during bloom use a rose fertilizer monthly. Stop feeding late September about 6-8 weeks before first frost.

Powdery Mildew is caused by a fungus that thrives in high humidity and 60-80° F temperatures. Look for white to gray powdery growth on leaves, shoots & buds. Leaves may distort and drop. Many gardeners mistakenly believe that you should never get leaves wet when powdery mildew is present. In reality a high-pressure spray of water washes the loose spores off the leaves and prevents them from germinating. Higher incidence of mildew during rainy periods is caused by the moisture in air (relative humidity), not by water on leaves. Plants in a sunny location with good air circulation are less likely to have a serious problem with the disease. Clean up and dispose of leaves after pruning in the dormant season.

Rust-Look for small orange pustules on the underside of leaves; its caused by a fungus that requires free water to grow. Provide good air circulation around plants. Remove fallen leaves.

Scale insects-Look for tiny shell-like bumps on stems; scale is a tiny insect that creates a crust over itself. Spray with horticultural oil when plant is dormant or when pest is in a crawling stage in early spring.

Spider mites cause stippled, mottled, bronzed leaves during hot spells and tiny webs on the underside. The mite is the size of a pepper grain. Spray bush with blasts of water from hose, especially the underside of leaves. Predatory mites of spider mites are available from commercial insectaries to place on rose bushes for biological control.

Rose IPM: There is a theme to controlling most rose pests. Spray roses with a strong stream of water in mid-late morning, pick off beetles and larvae, cut out any destroyed leaves, canes or buds, and leave beneficial bugs such as lady beetles, soldier beetles and lacewings alone, as they are your friends and will help control many pests. Provide good cultural practices, such as cleaning up around bushes after pruning, providing good air circulation and monitoring for problems to catch them early.