



Now is the Time to Prune Roses



Roses are attractive shrubs that are easy to grow. There are two main types of roses, garden roses and landscape roses. Garden roses include hybrid tea, grandifloras and climbing, and are grown mostly for their flowers. Landscape roses, sometimes called shrub roses, are roses planted as a general landscape shrub. They have glossy leaves and smaller thorns.

Fundamental pruning practices pertain to all types of roses: remove canes that have been broken or damaged, remove one or two canes that are rubbing against each other, remove spindly canes smaller in diameter than a lead pencil, and make cuts just above a bud or shoot that points toward the outside of the plant.

Winter is the time of year that is recommended for pruning roses. Pruning provides an opportunity to direct growth and invigorate rose plants and can contribute to reducing disease and insects in the spring. Pruning requirements vary among types of rose plants.

Traditional garden variety rose bushes benefit from annual pruning in which most top growth is removed leaving four to six canes in a circle around the plant and growing towards the outside. Cut back the remaining canes leaving about one-third to two-thirds of the previous year's growth, to a height of 18 to 24 inches. Removal of more wood results in fewer but larger flowers with longer stems; less pruning preserves the size of plants and results in a greater number of smaller flowers. Climbing roses should not be pruned for 2 – 3 years after planting allowing for them to become large and well established. At that time select six well-spaced horizontal spreading canes and tie them to the support. Remove all other canes. Subsequent annual pruning consists of removing the old heavy and unproductive canes and adding two or three new main canes to replace those removed and tying them to the support. Landscape roses, also called shrub roses, require less pruning than traditional garden varieties of roses. Prune these roses mainly to shape and control size, although rejuvenation pruning or removal of older stems every two to three years will renew vigor. Pruning paint or other wound dressings are not necessary.

During the growing season, the rule-of-thumb for cutting blooms on first-year plants is to make the cut above the first outwardly facing leaf. On well-established plants, cut blooms somewhat lower to insure new canes can support the weight of the blooms. Deadheading is the removal of spent rose blossoms, it allows the plant to conserve energy and leads to further flower production. To deadhead a rose plant, use the same guidelines as those for cutting blooms. Landscape varieties do not need to be deadheaded.

For more information contact the UCCE Master Gardeners of Glenn County at 865-1107, or stop by the weekly plant clinic at the Cooperative Extension office at 821 E. South Street in Orland, Wednesdays 2 – 4 PM.

Submitted by Nancy Mulligan, UC Master Gardener of Glenn County