



An Invitation to Garden Beauty -- A Rose Pruning Primer
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UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County

It's that pruning time of year! The period from Christmas until late February is the perfect time to set your roses on the path to spring and summer beauty. Your bushes will look more attractive and produce larger flowers with a good pruning, and you can shape them to the proper size for your garden. The health of the bush is also improved by the removal of dead and diseased canes, which stimulates the production of new growth through the emergence of vigorous new canes from its base. Even if your bushes still have leaves and flowers, their removal now is a chance to wipe away last year's problems and set a new path for the coming season.

Tools -- Use sharp bypass hand pruners for most cuts; long-handled lopping shears are good for thicker canes and give access to hard-to-reach places. A fine-toothed curved saw helps with the removal of the thickest canes. A pair of leather gloves reaching to the elbows protects from thorn pricks.

Pruning Essentials -- Completely remove all dead canes (likely to be grayish or brown in color and shriveled) and canes that have been less productive with a clean cut, close to where they emerge from the crown at the base of the bush. Completely remove diseased and damaged canes or cut them back to healthy wood at least one inch below the affected area so the inner wood (pith) is white. Remove all suckers coming from the root stock beneath the bush. Select the strongest four to seven outer canes (likely to be smooth and green or bronze in color) to become the foundation for next year's growth. They will ideally be arranged in a vase-like shape around the open center of the bush when pruning is finished. Continue to remove growth that is smaller than a pencil and which crosses or rubs on other growth with a clean cut at the parent stem. Direct new growth away from the center by making cuts at a 45-degree angle, ¼ inch above a bud that faces upward and to the outside of the bush. Buds can be found at leaf attachments; some will look like red dots or green smiles, while others might already be pushing out. Remove all growth headed toward the plant's center to discourage fungal diseases by improving light

January 29, 2020

access and air flow. Shorten the remaining canes on established hybrid tea and grandiflora varieties by one-third to one-half in length. Floribunda canes should be shortened by one quarter, with more healthy canes left on the bush.

Final Steps -- Remove and dispose of all remaining leaves, along with pruned cuttings, fallen leaves, and debris collected from under the bush. Make a heavy application of dormant spray or horticultural oil on a day where there will be no wet weather for at least 24 hours. Thoroughly spray the bush and the ground beneath it to suffocate any remaining insect eggs or fungal spores.

For more information on the “whys, whens and hows” of rose pruning, join UCCE Master Gardener Eve Keener for a workshop and demonstration on this art and grow roses your neighbors will envy! The class will be held Saturday, February 8 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, in the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville.

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512), or send us an email using the Ask a Master Gardener option on our website. Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. We also encourage you to visit us at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville, behind Folsom Lake College, El Dorado Center. See http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration_Garden for more information and days and hours of operation, or call us to schedule a tour. To sign up for notices and newsletters, see http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news. Master Gardeners are also on Facebook and Instagram; we hope you enjoy our postings and will share them with your friends.