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NEWS RELEASE



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Pruning of Roses

Rose plants are among the easiest plants to prune correctly. Pruning provides an opportunity to direct growth, invigorate rose plants and stimulate flower production.

Pruning requirements vary among types of rose plants. Hybrid teas, grandifloras, and many floribundas benefit from annual pruning in which three to five canes remain in a vase-shaped configuration. Landscape varieties such as 'Simplicity' may be hedged or left unpruned, although rejuvenation pruning or removal of older stems every 2 to 3 years will renew vigor in the planting. In most of California, pruning should be done in winter before buds swell, although it may be delayed where late spring frosts are common.

A starting point for pruning hybrid teas and grandifloras is to remove diseased and damaged wood, and wood harboring scale insects. Between one-third and two-thirds of healthy wood may then be removed through a combination of heading (shortening) and thinning (complete removal of branch) cuts. Cuts should be made within 1/4 inch above outwardly growing lateral buds or branches. 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. 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 five-leaflet leaf. On well-established plants, cut blooms somewhat lower to insure new canes can support the weight of the blooms. Cuts can be made above the first outwardly facing five-leaflet leaf up from the base of the shoot. Removal of spent rose blossoms allows the plant to conserve energy and leads to further flower production. To deadhead (remove spent flowers from) a rose plant, use the same guidelines as those for cutting blooms. Landscape varieties do not need to be deadheaded.

