



## Rose Pruning and Care

### Why Prune Roses? Tools for Pruning Roses, Pruning by Rose Classification, and Rose Care.

#### Why Prune Roses?

Pruning Roses is both a science and an art. Science demonstrates that roses which are properly pruned will be more vigorous, healthy and disease free. Art demonstrates that proper shaping will ensure a beautiful garden. However, rose pruning can be confusing, especially if you grow roses from a variety of classes. There are some simple rules that will help you prune all your roses perfectly.

The class of rose and time of year it blooms will influence the type and amount you need to prune. General pruning principles apply to all roses. Hybrid teas have the distinction of requiring the most pruning, while species roses require the least pruning to insure the best bloom and plant health. Understanding the growth habits of the various rose classes will help you to make minor adjustments in your rose pruning and care.

There are a few basic tasks that apply to all roses: remove dead, damaged or diseased wood; increase air circulation; keep the shrub from becoming a tangled mess; shape the plant; and encourage the growth of flowering wood. Dead heading removes spent blooms and encourages new blooms during the growing season. Most rose pruning is done in the late winter or early spring. The goal of winter pruning is to produce an open centered plant with new vigorous canes and blooms. This also allows more air and light to reach the plant.

#### Pruning Tools

- Gloves come in several styles, including gloves that have gauntlets (reinforced longer cuffs) and thorn resistant fabric.
- Bypass Pruners for most pruning cuts.
- Short and Long handled loppers for cutting canes.
- Hand saws for cutting very large canes and to remove canes at the base of the plant.
- Sharpening file for keeping tools sharp. Clean and sharpen tools when you put them away.
- Disinfectant spray or wipes.
- Optional: Hat, kneeling pad, garden tote for cuttings and a garden stool.

#### Basic Pruning Fundamentals

- Use clean, sharp tools.
- Cut rose canes at a 45-degree angle about 1/4 inch above an outward-facing bud and slant the cut away from the bud.
- Remove ALL dead or dying canes. These will appear shriveled, dark brown, or black.
- Remove ALL thin, weak canes that are smaller than a pencil in diameter.
- If roses are grafted and there is sucker growth, remove it at the base of the plant. It may be necessary to dig down to the root to completely remove the sucker. Sucker growth weakens the rose plant.

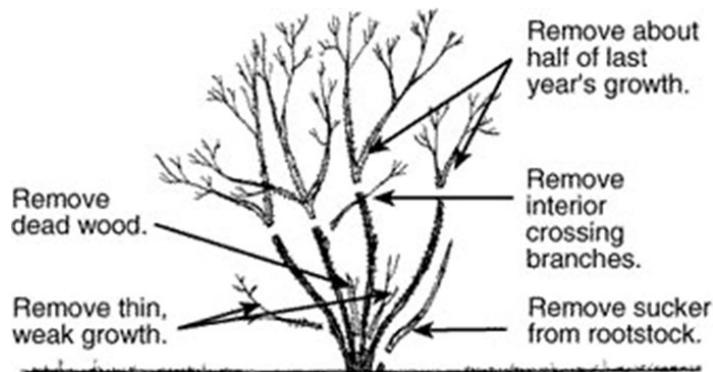
#### Modern Ever-Blooming Rose Pruning

Hybrid teas, grandifloras, floribundas (spray) and miniatures roses produce flowers on new or current season wood. These roses are pruned in the late winter or early spring. In moderate or Mediterranean climates these roses are usually

pruned by removing half of the plant's height and keeping the healthiest canes (3-5). Yolo County has favorable growing conditions, including a mild climate. For this reason, it is not necessary to hard prune roses or provide frost or freeze protection.

#### **Suggested Pruning sequence:**

- Remove all dead canes; cut them off at the crown or base of the plant.
- Remove all weak canes
- Leave 3 to 5 healthy, stout canes as evenly spaced as possible.
- Cut these canes back 18 to 24 inches high with outward facing buds.
- If you prefer your roses to be taller, you can thin them as described above, but allow them to be pruned to a height of 3-4 feet. Generally, the harder a rose is pruned, the later it will bloom, and it will produce fewer but larger roses.



#### **Modern Shrub Rose Pruning**

Repeat-flowering shrub roses bear flowers on mature stems that are not old and woody. Severe pruning of these roses would result in reduced flower production. Gently prune these roses for the first 2 years. Wait until they develop a good shape before pruning for size. From the 3rd year and beyond, remove 1/3 of the growth each season. An example of a shrub rose would be David Austin Roses, which blend old garden roses with modern repeat blooming roses to produce roses that have many of the old garden characteristics of fragrance, shape and color, but include repeat blooms and disease resistance. Another type of shrub rose is the Simplicity Rose variety which is an excellent disease-free landscape rose. These roses usually have a rounded shape.

#### **Suggested Pruning Sequence:**

- In the spring, remove one-third of the very oldest canes. \* This helps keep the plant from becoming overgrown with poorly flowering canes.
- Remove no more than one-third of the shrub height.
- This one-third method helps to ensure a good supply of flower producing wood, while renewing the rose plant and encouraging healthy new growth.

#### **Old Garden Rose Pruning**

These roses are pruned much like modern shrub roses with some important considerations based on class. Old once-blooming roses such as **Alba, Gallica, Cen folia, Damask and Moss Roses** produce flowers on old wood. All pruning should be **delayed until after flowering**. Then you can do as little or as much pruning as is required to maintain the plant. Thin and remove old wood. Depending on their growth, these plants may not require much pruning. Repeat flowering old garden roses such as **Bourbons, Hybrid Perpetuals, Tea and Portland** bloom on both new and old wood. These can be pruned **before they flower**, without fear of losing blooms.

#### **Climber and Rambler Rose Pruning**

Climbers and ramblers usually need several seasons in the garden before pruning is required. Pruning is often limited to removing winter-damaged wood. Pruning is similar in both classes. **Ramblers** are once blooming and thus should be

pruned **after they have flowered**. Climbers are **usually repeat bloomers** and are pruned in late **winter or early spring**. Reducing the side shoots or lateral branches to about 3-5 inches stimulates flower production, resulting in more blooms. Train canes horizontally to encourage bloom production. When removing a cane, cut it back to the base of the rose crown. To shorten a cane, cut it to a lateral bud and allow this to be the new growth point. These plants grow best if trained on a support structure.

### **What Roses Need to Thrive in Your Garden**

- Fertile, well-drained soil
- 6 or more hours of direct sunlight
- Summer irrigation: usually 2 times a week from April through October
- Plant 4 feet apart.
- Mulch to a thickness of 2 to 3 inches to retain moisture and keep roots cool.
- Fertilize with organic fertilizer and steer or chicken manure (only in winter).
- Keeping a Garden Journal with notes on seasonal water requirements, pest and disease problems and rose performance will help to simplify your future garden care.

### **Encourage Beneficial Insects in Your Garden**

Get to know your beneficial garden insects. They help to prevent and eliminate garden pests. They include lady beetles, green lacewings, ground beetles, pirate bugs, soldier beetles, braconid wasps and aphid midge. Using commercial insecticides will reduce your beneficial insect population. Plant flowering companion plants to attract beneficial insects to your garden. These include feverfew, fern leaf yarrow, alyssum, California buckwheat, penstemon and many herbs.

### **Seasonal Rose Care Calendar**

<b>January</b>	Winter Prune Modern Roses	Remove Leaves/ Garden Debris	Plant Bare Root Roses	Apply Dormant Spray	Mulch Roses/ Garden
<b>February</b>	Finish Pruning	Clean Up	Weed	Finish Mulching	
<b>March</b>	Fertilize with Organic Fertilizer	Check Irrigation System			
<b>April</b>	Watch for Pests	Finger Prune	Weed		
<b>May</b>	Fertilize after 1st Bloom	Visit Rose Gardens & Parks	Share Bouquets with Friends		
<b>June</b>	Deadhead Roses	Prune Once Blooming Roses	Check for Pests		
<b>July</b>	Fertilize Lightly	Deadhead Roses	Monitor Water Needs	Prune Roses	Summer Clean-up
<b>August</b>	Deadhead Roses	Top Up Mulch	Weed		
<b>September</b>	Fertilize Last Time	Monitor Water Needs			
<b>October</b>	Deadhead Roses	Deadhead Roses	Check for Pests		
<b>November</b>	Enjoy Last Bouquets	Remove Unhappy Rose Bushes			
<b>December</b>	Check catalogs & websites for New Roses	Order New Roses	Check Local Nurseries for New Roses		

## **Garden Hygiene**

To maintain the health of your roses it is important to remove all rose debris, including all cuttings and leaves. It may be necessary to hand pick any remaining leaves once you have completed pruning each rose plant. This will help to prevent insect pest eggs and fungi from over-wintering in your garden. Do not put your rose debris in your compost pile. A clean garden will greatly reduce the need for using pesticides and fungicides later in the season.

## **Selecting Roses**

It is best to select a rose variety that will do well in your climate zone. You can find a list of reliable rose varieties, by class, on The American Rose Society website ([rose.org](http://rose.org)). In addition to this resource, you can visit your local nursery. They generally sell roses that will grow best in your garden. Roses are selected on the basis of color, fragrance, class and hardiness. Hardiness or suitability is the most important consideration. Decide on the ultimate use for your rose plant. Do you want cut flowers, a mass of landscape color, or a climber for a fence or arbor? Do you have the space and sun exposure necessary for the rose you choose? Be sure the rose you select meets your list of criteria.

Winter is best time to shop for the largest selection of roses. Local nurseries sell barefoot roses from late December through February. This is when you will have the best selection. They may also stock potted roses throughout the year, but on a more limited basis. If you choose a potted rose, check to be sure it is vigorous and not root bound. If you do not find the rose you want at a local nursery, you can usually find it through a catalogue or mail order website.

Roses are graded according to their quality, which should be noted on the tag. The best plants are designated as Grade No.1, which means they have 3 or more healthy canes and a strong root system. Lower grades are less expensive, but they are often slow growers and take longer to establish. A rose that carries the All-American Rose Selection designation (AARS) has the benefit of being widely tested in public gardens nationwide. They have been judged to be superior in disease resistance, flower production, color and fragrance.

You can visit local rose gardens to view a wide variety of roses and observe how they perform throughout the year. There are several in our area including:

The Woodland Library Rose Garden, Woodland [www.woodlandpubliclibrary.com](http://www.woodlandpubliclibrary.com); The International World Peace Rose Garden, Sacramento [www.worldpeacegardens.org](http://www.worldpeacegardens.org); The Frederick N. Evans Rose Garden in McKinley Park, Sacramento <http://www.mckinleyparkcenter.org>; The Old City Cemetery, Sacramento [www.historicoldcitycemetery.org](http://www.historicoldcitycemetery.org)

## **Resources:**

Rose Family Rosaceae: Rose Family  
<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/PLANTS/rose.html>

American Rose Society  
<https://www.rose.org>

Roses: Placing Roses, Planting and Care:  
The Best Varieties, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition  
<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/GARDEN/PLANTS/rose.htm>

Sacramento Rose Society  
[www.sactorose.org](http://www.sactorose.org)

Sunset Healthy Roses 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Publication number 21581  
<https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/Details.aspx?itemNo=21589>

David Austin Roses  
<https://www.davidaustinroses.com/us/>

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