



HEALTHY GARDEN TIPS

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University of California Cooperative Extension – Napa County

PRUNING ROSE BUSHES

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Pruning rose bushes provide an opportunity to direct growth and invigorate plants. All Hybrid Tea, Floribunda, Grandiflora, Shrub and Miniature roses should be pruned during their dormant season starts the end of December and continues through January and into the middle of February. Most of the leaves should have dropped off the bush during the dormant season. If not, remove any remaining leaves so that you can see the new buds.

Before you begin to prune, be sure your pruners are clean and sharp. A bypass pruner is best for cleaner cuts. A pruning saw with a narrow blade and a lopper are also helpful for thicker canes or ones that are deep within the bush.

For mature rose bushes, prune off 1/3 to 2/3 of the growth each winter. All dead canes and crossing branches should be removed. The proper cut for the canes should be 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch above a bud or bud eye and should be straight or flat across the bush. It is not necessary to seal the cuts. (See example photos on reverse side of this handout.)

For climbing roses, train their canes across a fence or on a trellis. As they grow, cut them off when the desired length is achieved. To create more blooms along each cane, cut the lateral branches leaving several bud eyes. Climbers require pruning and shaping of the bush all year with very little left to do during the dormant season; clean and remove weak canes or ones growing in the wrong direction.

Prune Old Garden Roses after their bloom is finished in late spring or early summer. Do not prune in the winter. Prune only enough to shape the bush to the desired size and always remove sick or dying branches whenever you observe them.

Finally, clean up any remaining debris under and around all bushes. If you want to use dormant sprays, consult your local nursery for product information and follow the directions on the label.

Throughout the growing season, remove any unwanted growth such as new stems growing in the middle of the bush or branches growing in the wrong direction. Most importantly, enjoy all the beautiful flowers.

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