

Rose Pruning

Rose pruning is often perceived as confusing because there are so many different types of roses. Knowing what type of rose you have and when it blooms can help you fine-tune the particulars of that rose. However, pruning can be as simple as our 8 easy steps below!

- **Why prune roses?** As with any pruning, the basic concept is to remove dead, damaged, or diseased wood; increase air circulation; maintain and shape the plant; and encourage the growth of flowering wood. Pruning should be done in the early spring- March or early April- a good indicator is to wait until forsythias start to bloom, or just as the rose buds break dormancy.
- **Rose Pruning in 8-Easy steps!**
 - 1) Use clean and sharp equipment
 - 2) Remove dead, diseased, damaged and crossing branches. Cut to about 1/4" above an outward facing healthy bud at a 45° angle. The cut should be going the same direction as the bud is angled.
 - 3) Inspect the pith (the middle of the stem) to see if it is healthy or not. It should be creamy white. (not brown) If necessary, continue down the stem --even to the ground, to remove a dead stem.
 - 4) Also look for canker in the stem, removing any to a healthy bud at least 1" below the canker.
 - 5) Annually, up to 1/3 of the oldest, woodiest stems can be cut down to the crown to air the plant out. This removes branches which are more susceptible to diseases and produce less bloom.
 - 6) Remove weak stems less than a pencil's width.
 - 7) Shape the bush as needed, removing **NO MORE** than 1/3 the canopy height, except for Knockouts, which you can prune out up to 1/2 the height. When you are done, there should be healthy, stout branches evenly spaced throughout the plant.

- 8) Most roses are grafted onto root stock which can produce sucker growth. It is recommended to dig to remove the suckers from below ground. Cutting them off above ground will only encourage more.

- **Rose Types**

Modern Ever-Blooming Roses: hybrid teas, grandifloras, floribundas, miniatures Produce best flowers on new or current season's wood. Prune very hard in spring, following the above details.

Modern Shrub Roses Produce best flowers on MATURE stems, but NOT old and woody stems. DO NOT prune for at least 3 seasons after planting, and thereafter apply the 1/3 rule, removing only one-third of the very oldest canes each spring. This helps keep the plant from becoming an overgrown thicket of poor-flowering canes, and provides a cycle of 1/3 new canes every year!

Old Garden Roses- once bloomers Prune the same as modern shrub roses except for considerations based on class. Some classes flower on old wood, so delay pruning to after flowering to identify unproductive or damaged old wood. Then do as little or as much pruning as required to maintain the plant. Others bloom on both old and new wood so they can be pruned a little more aggressively and before they flower without fear of losing all the blooms!

Climbers and Ramblers. These roses may need a few seasons in the garden before any pruning is necessary. And then, it may be limited to winter damage. Each class can be pruned similarly, just with different timing. Ramblers bloom once, therefore they should be pruned right after blooming in early summer. Climbers repeat bloom and should be pruned early spring. Train canes to grow horizontally to encourage more side shoots. Reduce these to 3"-6" for optimum show of bloom!