

Pruning Roses

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Why Prune: It is imperative to prune roses annually to maintain the shape and blooming qualities of the rose. You'll keep your plant healthy and stimulate growth by removing any weak, dead or diseased canes.

Tools: Loppers, shears, secateurs, saw and gloves. Sterilize tools with alcohol before using and make sure tools are sharp so as not to damage the plant.

When to Prune: Pruning needs to be done during the dormant months of January and February. Later pruning can be detrimental as the plant's energy will be depleted and plants could be susceptible to frost.

How to Prune: If possible, cut above a bud on a slight angle. For a large group of shrub roses, a hedge trimmer is useful.

How Much to Prune: Different roses require different pruning techniques. A good rule of thumb is to prune down to one half or one third of the original height of the plant and thin out any spindly stems.

1. Climbing and Rambling Roses require less pruning as the goal is to get them to climb and ramble along fences, arbors, or other structures.

2. Repeat Flowering Shrub Roses (English roses, some old roses): The shape of the plant is the most important. You can be flexible according to your wishes, but reducing the height to one-third to two-thirds is normal.

3. Once Flowering Shrub Roses (old roses such as Albas, Gallicas, Damasks): Do not hard prune as flowering shoots are only produced on stems that are at least one year old.

4. Bush Roses (hybrid teas, floribundas, patio, polyanthas, and miniatures): Hard pruning the height by two-thirds to three-fourths and thinning is recommended.

5. Species Roses (originals): No pruning necessary as they are close to wild plants and thrive on neglect.

6. Standard Roses: Standard roses are formed by budding any of the above roses on a special stem. Pruning to one-third will be sufficient with thinning and light pruning throughout the year.

Clean up: Rake all leaves, stems and canes. If your roses are not patented, you can share healthy canes with friends or plant in other areas of your garden. Add mulch to the rose bush.

McDonnell Nursery is offering a winter rose pruning workshop at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 27 at 193 Moraga Way in Orinda. Space is limited so call (925) 254-3713. This will be a very useful event for all rose lovers.

Every year I add a few more roses to my landscape to increase colors, scents, and shapes.

This season I will be planting these selections from the glorious David Austin collection:

Comte de Chambord
Strawberry Hill
Crown Princess Margareta
Olivia Rose Austin
Huntington Rose
Charles Rennie Mackintosh
Lady of Shalott
Spirit of Freedom
The Wedgwood Rose

Investigate the choices of David Austin Roses at your favorite nursery and garden center or save 15 percent on your order through Feb. 28 at www.DavidAustinRoses.com.

Roses are red, pink, salmon, yellow, orange, purple, white, mauve, and a multitude of other hues. I encourage you to put on your rose-colored glasses, gloves, hat, and enjoy pruning and planting the "rose that by any other word would smell as sweet."

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.

Cynthia Brian



Yellow roses and rose hips.



Hedge rose in pretty pink.