

# Pruning Roses

## Reasons to prune:

- To remove dead, diseased, damaged, and non-productive growth
- To rejuvenate an old plant
- To maximize the growth on a plant
- To maintain a desirable size and shape bush
- To open the center of the plant to light and air

## When to prune in East Tennessee:

- Spring pruning is mid-to-late March while plants are still dormant
- Often coincides with the blooming of yellow forsythia
- Least stressful time to prune, very little growth activity
- Easy to see dead and damaged branches
- Resist the urge to prune too early as new growth will be killed by late frosts

## What to prune:

- Remove dead, diseased and weak branches at the point of origin
- Remove canes thinner (smaller) than a pencil
- Remove crossing canes & branches that may rub together (damage canes)
- Remove branches that grow toward the center of the plant. This opens the plant to sun and improves air circulation which minimizes the risk of fungal diseases like blackspot and powdery mildew.
- If your rose is grafted onto a rootstock, remove any suckers that originate from beneath the bud union. They are from the rootstock and are different from the grafted rose.

## How to prune:

- Use sharp by-pass pruners to get a clean cut. Do not use anvil pruners which can crush the cane
- Pruning cuts should be made ¼ inch above an outward facing growth bud or "eye" at a 45 degree angle slanting away from the bud.
- Always cut down to healthy (white) wood. If the cut shows unhealthy growth (caramel in color), take it farther down until you cut into healthy wood.
- A few drops of Elmer's Exterior Wood Glue on the pruning cut will keep borers out.
- Different types of roses are pruned different ways. See the following tips.

## Hybrid Teas, Grandifloras, and Standards:

- Cut back 1/3 for a moderate pruning (produces smaller but more blooms)
- Cut back 1/2 for harder pruning (produces larger and fewer blooms)
- Try to leave 3-5 healthy canes spaced evenly around the bush
- Shape for roundness

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### Floribundas:

- Prune much like hybrid tea, but less severely. Allow thinner shoots to stay.

### English Roses (David Austin) and shrub roses:

- Cut bush down by 1/3 its height. Only thin a little. Round & shape the bush.

### Climbers:

- If the climber is small, wait 1-2 years after planting for first pruning.
- Prune climbers that bloom once a season after they bloom. Prune reblooming climbers while they are dormant in spring.
- After climbers have achieved their full expanse, prune lateral growth (coming from main canes) back to 4 eyes.
- Four or five-year old canes are likely to have thick bark that constricts the flow of sap and reduces flowering. Cut close to the ground and remove these old canes in spring.

### Small roses (miniatures and minifloras):

- Use the same guidelines given for larger type roses except do it in miniature.
- There is no limit to the number of canes to retain.
- Remove the top one-third.

### After you spring prune:

- Clean beds of all clippings. Do not put clippings into your compost pile. Throw them in the trash.
- Be sure there is no foliage left on the bush from the previous year. It is easier to remove it now because most of the foliage is going to fall off anyways. It also helps with disease control.
- Spray bushes and bed well with dormant oil and lime sulphur.

### Deadheading (removing spent blooms) is summer pruning.

- You direct the growth whenever you cut

