

Affiliate of the American Rose Society

Pruning

Why prune

We prune roses to promote their health, vigor and to give them direction-to tell them how and where to grow. Pruning gives the plants a shape, a style, removes unproductive wood and provides good air circulation.

When to prune

The best time to prune is before new growth starts in the spring, sometime after the last killing frost. Once growth is 2 to 3 inches long, you should not prune since there can be significant damage from breakage. Fall pruning is necessary only when plants are extremely tall to prevent wind damage during the winter.

Use any pruning shears designed for roses. A 2-inch blade gives the best results, or use long-handled lopping shears for larger canes.

What to prune

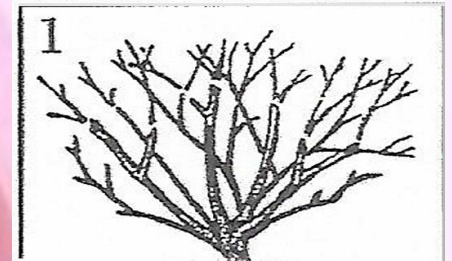
Weak or diseased canes. Winter-damaged wood, which looks brown on the outside, light brown and dry when cut, should be cut off 1 to 2 inches below the damage. Any branch crossing or rubbing another should be removed-always leave the newest, healthiest cane.

When in doubt

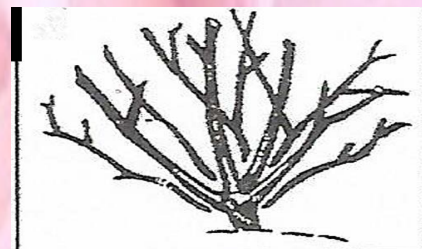
As a general rule, and if you're not sure what to cut, wait. You can always make more cut later when the bush has leafed out and you can see its shape more easily.

How to prune

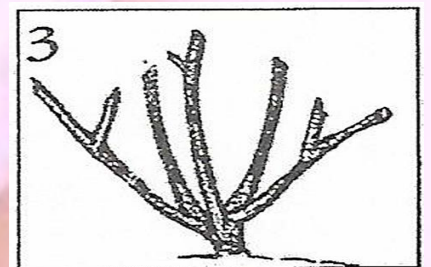
1. Trim twiggy top growth by about a third so you can see the structure of your plant.



2. Take out dead wood, canes that cross the center of the bush, and any shoots (suckers) growing below the bud union.



3. Shape the plant by removing some canes. You are safe in cutting back to 5 to 10 strong canes.



4. Cut 1/4 inch above dormant bud eyes that face outward from the bush. New growth will come from these eyes.

