

Macdonalds Nursery

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PRUNING - ROSES

Now winter has arrived and our roses have lost their leaves, it is time to consider pruning them.

As roses produce their flowers at the tips of new growth, pruning is important and is carried out primarily to:

- manage the size and shape of the plant
- remove any dead or diseased wood
- promote strong new growth
- encourage flowering

With these reasons in mind, pruning of roses (this includes Hybrid Teas, Floribundas, Miniatures and both bush and standards) can be done in several simple steps...

- 1 – Remove the dead or diseased wood.
- 2 – Remove spindly growth.
- 3 – Remove any branches in the centre or that cross one another to open the centre of the bush up.
- 4 – Now remove the top third of the bush

Simply start by removing any dead wood or suckers from your plant.

Now remove any weak or spindly growth - that is, any growth that is less than average thickness.

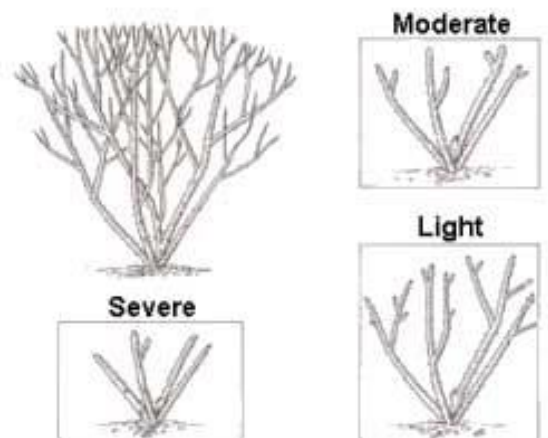
Now remove any branches that are crossing the middle of the plant, as we need the centre of the rose to be open to provide good air circulation through the bush and to reduce the onset of black spot and mildew.

Both these diseases are encouraged by moist foliage and poor air movement.

Now cut any remaining branches that are crowding the branch beside them or are likely to rub on another branch causing injury and so encouraging the onset of disease.

The final step is to remove the top third of the bush, cutting to an outward facing bud. This will help you maintain the plants height.

Remember when pruning, the harder we prune the stronger the resulting growth and the larger the individual flowers. But severe pruning also means we will get fewer flowers, so don't cut back your roses too hard.



Suckers

These will come from below the graft and are generally very vigorous with a slightly different leaf shape to the rest of the plant. These should be removed as soon as they appear regardless of the time of year.

Water Shoots

These are strong vigorous growths which are generally red-ish in colour and are produced from the base of the plant and need to be treated differently - in that their tip growth should only be pruned lightly as they have a tendency to decay and die back. Do not worry if these shoots are poking out above the plant once you have finished pruning as following the first flush of flowers they can usually be reduced back to fit into the roses general shape.

Climbing Roses/Weepers

These produce long strong canes that need to be tied to a framework or structure. These canes will then produce short growths along their length in the summer which then produce flowers. These short growths are then pruned back (after flowering and again the following winter) to two or three buds from which they will then produce more flowers. Try and remove one or two of these long canes every couple of years and replace them with strong new growths. This will then keep your climbing or weeping rose in good health and help to promote flowers all over the rose and not just at the top.

Pest and Disease Control

After pruning, it is best to spray your roses with Kocide or Liquid Copper to control black spot and mildew. If this is done several times before the first flowers, your roses should stay clean through the growing season.

If your roses have had heavy infestations of mites or aphids over summer then these first couple of sprays could be with Lime Sulphur to control these pests which is also a suitable control product for mildew and black spot.

For Aphid control during the summer growing months use Confidor. This is available as a spray or a tablet to place into the soil for long term control. For an organic control, use Pest Oil or Pyrethrum.

If mildew or black spot persist throughout the growing season, continue spraying with Eco-fungicide.

During early spring give your roses a good feed using either Rose Food or the very good Organic Pellet Fertiliser. By feeding at this time you are ensuring that your roses will produce lots of new growth and lots of flowers.

And of course mulch rose beds using either pea straw or lucerne to conserve moisture and keep the roots of the plants cool.

Watering by applying a good deep soaking every ten to fourteen days. You will find this will be ample and they will survive very well on a lot less water than this.

As the first flush of flowers finish, remove these by cutting back to the first set of leaves containing five leaflets and to an outward pointing bud. Then give your roses another feed and they will grow away quickly and produce another flush of flowers. Repeat this procedure each time your roses finish their flush of flowers and you will get several lots of flowers through the summer months. This light pruning will also maintain the plants height preventing it from becoming too tall.

