



"Prune like a Pro!" **2021**

Roses **(Rosa)**

TITLE: Roses (Rosa)

Description: Whether you are growing hybrid teas, climbers, or landscape roses, all roses require some pruning each year. Pruning is necessary to remove winter-killed canes (stems), control size, and train the plant for its best production of blossoms. However, different types of roses require different pruning techniques. In this case, we are NOT addressing the climbing roses.

Objective(s): Learn the basic techniques for pruning roses. The video features the pruning of Knock-Out™ roses bushes. Then do additional research for the details of pruning your specific type of rose(s).

WHAT: Certain pruning techniques are appropriate for all roses. Prune weak-growing varieties lightly and vigorous varieties more severely. Prune first-year plants lightly to allow them to put more energy into establishing a strong root system.

WHY: As a caning shrub, roses can quickly become overgrown/thick. Roses are also susceptible to many diseases, which can be aggravated by lack of airflow and sunshine into the shrub.

WHEN: Remove the four D's (dead, diseased, damaged, dysfunctional) branches as soon as you notice them. Roses need different types and timing of pruning depending on their variety. Repeat blooming roses such as Knock-out™, floribunda, and hybrid tea roses need a heavy annual pruning that is done in the spring, just as the buds break dormancy. A reliable rule-of-thumb in east TN is to prune roses when the forsythia is in bloom. Pruning before that may result in damage from a frost or freeze.

WHERE: Roses do best in full sun, and good soil. That \$50 rose should be planted in a \$100 hole.

HOW: Be sure to wear your PPE (personal protective equipment) – especially gloves!

- Make sure your tools are sharp and sanitized. If you have any concern that one rose shrub has a disease, be sure to disinfect your pruners before moving to the next shrub.
- Start by removing the four D's (dead, diseased, damaged, dysfunctional) branches. Rubbing/crossing branches should be removed before they become damaged or diseased.
- If yours is a grafted rose, be sure to remove any suckers that are growing from below the bud union. Suckers from the root stock (below the union) can overtake the grafted rose.
- When you make a cut, look at the center of the cane. It should be white and plump, not brown and withered. If it doesn't look white and plump, cut farther until you find healthy wood. If no live buds remain, remove the entire cane.
- Prune to an outward facing bud to keep new growth from growing into center of the bush.
- Consider sealing cuts that are larger than the diameter of a pencil with wood glue, to prevent cane borers from entering and causing damage.
- Prune for a balanced shape and an open center, for better airflow and sunshine.
- Pruning for shape is done in late winter; cutting back height at the start of winter keeps the canes from whipping around in the wind and causing damage to the shrub.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT POINTS:

- **Blooms on “New Wood” -- prune in early spring**
 - **Landscape roses such as the popular Knock-out™ rose** variety are widely used in home gardens. Pruning Knock-out™ roses is very simple. Like other roses, they should be cut back before winter to around 30 inches high to reduce winter damage. The major pruning is done in the spring. Keep the five best/healthiest canes and remove the others.
 - **Hybrid Teas, Floribundas & Grandifloras:** Modern reblooming roses are pruned in the early spring just as the buds begin to swell. Prune hard if you want large blooms suitable for cut flowers. This will produce fewer total blooms. Cut out all but three to five of the healthiest, most vigorous canes. Prune these canes down to 15 to 18 inches from ground level.
- **Blooms on “Old Wood” – prune after flowering**
 - **Old Garden Roses:** Old roses do not need the hard pruning that is needed by many modern roses. Hard pruning can ruin their graceful shape and severely reduce their flowering. Preserve the informal habit of old garden roses by removing no more than one-third of each bush. Generally, remove only the oldest, woody stems that are no longer productive. Most old garden roses bloom once in a season. Prune immediately after bloom to keep old roses under control and vigorous. Leave some of the bright red hips for fall and winter color.
 - **Climbing roses:** Climbers should be pruned immediately after flowering. Do not prune these types of roses heavily in the early spring since they bloom on “old wood”.

Additional Resources / References:

“Our Rose Garden”, University of Illinois Extension, <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/roses/prune.cfm>

“A Guide to Pruning Roses”, University of Maryland Extension,
<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/guide-pruning-roses>

“Pruning Roses”, Clemson Cooperative Extension – Home and Garden Information Center,
<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/pruning-roses/>

“Pruning Roses”, P.Allen Smith, <https://pallensmith.com/2014/12/18/pruning-roses/>

“Pruning Roses”, Mississippi State Extension,
<https://extension.msstate.edu/sites/default/files/topic-files/flower/pruning-diagrams.pdf>

Knox County Master Gardeners website: www.knoxcountymastergardener.org

Knox County Master Gardeners Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/KnoxCountyMG>

Ask-a-Master Gardener / Knox County Extension Helpline: (865) 215-2340

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