

Rose Pruning the Easy Way

Roses need to be pruned each winter. Rose pruning is actually very easy, so don't be afraid to have a go. Remember roses are very forgiving plants and some pruning is always better than none at all. Pruning is always an invigorating process for roses, and you'll be delighted with the spring flush of blooms from the roses you've pruned.

Why do we prune roses? The object of rose pruning is to produce vigorous flower bearing new growth. We also prune to remove older un-productive and diseased wood and to help maintain rose bushes in desirable shapes.

When do you prune roses? In Perth, winter rose pruning is best done any time from late June through until mid August.

What tools do I need? Good quality sharp secateurs, pruning saw (modern small folding saws are most useful), a pair of long handled secateurs or loppers, hedge shears, and leather gloves. Alternatively you can use electric hedge shears, a brush cutter or chainsaw.

Rose Pruning the Easy Way. What to do.

Hybrid tea roses, floribunda, miniature, shrub and rambling roses, can simply be cut back to half of their original height, using loppers or hedge shears. Then tidy them up by removing any diseased older wood, crossing branches or branches growing into the centre of the bush. At pruning time it's a good idea to strip the remaining foliage off roses and remove leaf litter from around the bushes. Immediately after pruning give roses a winter spray with Lime Sulphur, this will help control mites, aphids and fungal spores which can over-winter on the canes.

What about pruning other types of roses?

Standard Roses- Remember standard roses are just a rose grown on a tall stem. Prune exactly the same as a normal bush rose. The most important thing is to only prune branches growing above the graft/crown (the point at the top of the standard where all the branches arise from). Don't prune below the graft/crown or you'll destroy your standard.

Weeping Roses- Best pruned by removing overcrowded branches and pruning back to about one third to half of their original length.

Climbing Roses- If you look at a climbing rose you'll see it consists of several main framework branches and then many secondary branches, which grow off the framework branches. The secondary branches are the main flower bearing branches. When pruning climbers, tip prune the main framework branches (to contain their spread) and cut the secondary branches back by about one third to half their length. It is usually necessary to thin the secondary branches, so that they are well spaced along the framework. If growing climbers on a fence or wall, finish off by tying branches out into a fan shape.

As the years go by it's possible to re-invigorate the main framework branches by cutting these back to younger, vigorous secondary branches. These branches will then become the replacement framework branches.

David Austin Roses- Generally prune by removing about one third of original height.



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