



# Winter Pruning Your Roses



It's time to prune your roses. The suggested time is the Winter/dormant season and this is generally, January, in Northern California.

Even though your roses may still be leafy, budded or blooming it is time to force them to rest. Pruning them back now, removing every single leaf and dormant spraying with copper will provide a healthy beginning for the coming season.

Here are some “what you'll need” tips gleaned from rosarians David Lowell and Ken and Judy Jones, along with our years of experience:

- Body armor - safety or prescription glasses, a hat, and a long sleeved sweatshirt will go a long way to insulate you from thorny branches; a good pair of leather gloves (the new gauntlet types do a good job of protecting your forearms);
- Pruning shears - sharp hand shears along with a long handled lopper and a pruning saw are helpful for hard to reach or extra large wood;
- Pruning seal - black asphalt or new lanolin types (sealing cuts prevents the cane borer insect from invading and killing stems);
- Copper dormant spray like Micro Cop to control over-wintering diseases.

For specific variety and form (bush, miniature, tree, shrub & climber) pruning tips, come in and one our rose experts will be happy to help. In the mean time here are some pruning basics. For the most part roses produce flowers on current season growth. Therefore the more new growth you have the more bloom potential you'll enjoy. Pruning is one way of stimulating new growth.



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## Winter Pruning Your Roses (cont.)



If your bush form roses have grown sky high lop off the top one quarter to one third of the plant so you can more easily and safely do the 'fine pruning'. For bush and tree forms you always want to maintain evenly spaced canes (stems) around the outside of the plant. The number of canes that you leave depends on the vigor of the plant. Three to seven is the rule in the case of bush roses. Tree roses rarely sprout new canes as they age so encourage and maintain those well-spaced branches. The final height of the canes depends on the variety and vigor of the plant.

We have gotten away from pruning roses to within an inch of their life (6-12 inches). Leaving the canes a bit longer provides the plant with extra energy for the coming season's performance. In some cases, leaving canes as long as 24 to 36 inches is beneficial. Prune to an outside bud (where a leaf was). This will ensure that the next branch will grow in an outward direction. On both tree and bush roses remove all twigs and stems that are growing into the center of the plant. The extra sunlight will warm the bud union (the central base of plant from which the rose variety that you have selected has been budded onto the rose rootstock). This encourages more young stems to grow that will be eventually selected to replace the older canes. The extra sunlight also stimulates increased flower production.

Always remove any stems coming from below the bud union. These suckers are vigorous and can over grow the desirable rose. If your white or pink rose is producing small red flowers it has been taken over by the rootstock rose.

Maintain a nice compliment of permanent climbing rose canes that you will arch against the fence, wall or train over an arbor. The stems that grow off these permanent canes are pruned back to four buds. The resulting new growth will produce a mass of flowers. There are always exceptions to the rule so touch base with our rose experts for just the right pruning guidance.