

IF-16 General Rose Pruning

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Pruning roses is not as hard as you think. A little time, courage and experience is all it takes to become reasonably proficient. Pruning roses accomplishes the following:

- Removing dead, dying and diseased tissue.
- Redirecting growth
- Stimulating new growth
- Opening the center for light penetration and air movement.
- Improving the quality of the bloom.

Begin with acquiring and organizing the correct tools – You will need:

- Good leather gloves
- Sharp by-pass pruning shears; anvil pruning shears are not appropriate.
- Sharp by-pass lopping shears.
- Pruning saw.
- Spray disinfectant or spray bottle with 20% household bleach.
- Can of spray lubricant.
- Optional: Sealant for cane ends.
- Optional: Hand sharpener.

Clean and smooth cuts encourage rapid healing of wounds. This requires sharp pruning tools. Do not leave stubs of canes as they die back and avoid tearing bark when removing canes.

Start at the base of the plant and pick pruning cuts closest to the base. This prevents you from pruning a branch and then realizing that the whole thing needs to be removed. If you follow these general rules you can't go wrong:

- Cut out dead, diseased and dying canes first.
- Thin out or head back broken canes
- Remove crossing canes.
- Remove small canes in the interior or small suckers around the base.
- Remove old rank or unproductive growth from the center.
- Head back the canes to 1/3 to 1/2 the original height.
- Make heading cuts to an outside facing bud.
- Remove all of previous year's leaves – especially if disease has been an issue.
- Seal open cane ends bigger than a pencil.
- Surface sterilize your pruning tools between each shrub and between each cut if there is evidence of disease.



Before



After

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Heading cuts should be 1/4" above the bud axil and at a 45 degree angle. If the angle is too steep or the cut too close to the bud, you may end up damaging or killing the bud so it is better to be too high and too shallow. . If the length is too long or the angle too flat it's just ugly, but it's preferable to a steep deep angle that kills the bud.

General pruning rules of thumb for some roses are:

1. Hybrid tea:
 - a. Leave 4 to 5 good canes
 - b. Prune to open the middle
 - c. Head prune canes to 1/2 to 1/3 of original height.
2. Floribunda and grandiflora:
 - a. Leave 5 to 7 good canes.
 - b. Prune to open the middle
 - c. Head prune to 1/3 original height.
3. Miniature:
 - a. Cut out dead and dying canes
 - b. Head prune for size and shape
4. Climbers:
 - a. Cut out canes going in the absolute wrong direction.
 - b. Finger prune buds heading in the wrong direction
 - c. Select main canes and prune lateral canes to pencil size 12" to 14"
 - d. Tie up canes in proper direction

