

HOW TO PUT YOUR ROSES TO BED

Check pH — Roses prefer pH 6.5. Have you done your yearly liming? Mix 2 - 4 cups of lime into the top one inch of soil (all the way to drip line).

Pruning

- Stop dead-heading in November (remember—cutting encourages new growth and we want to promote “winter rest”).
- Prune tall canes to 5 feet (in December). To avoid damage to the canes from winter winds, stake/secure tall canes. This also helps to prevent heaving/rocking of root system.
- January/February is a good time to prune climbers, own-root english roses and shrub roses like knockout and drift. Shrub roses can be cut pretty low—even 10-15” from the ground. Prune couple of the oldest canes every year to promote new canes. If you are unsure about climbers, we offer a rose pruning classes mid-February.
- Rip off last years leaves Especially climbers hold onto their old leaves and those may carry disease. Leaving the leaves only encourages a fresh outbreak of disease.

Spraying

As roses rarely loose all the leaves during the Ga winter, you may choose to continue your spray program. In January, combine contact fungicide (e.g. Mancozeb) with dormant oil to combat overwintering fungal spores and hibernating insects. It helps the plant go fully dormant (remaining leaves will fall off). Do not apply when weather is freezing. (Start spray program as soon as new leaves emerge in spring.)

Winter Protection

It is not exactly know what causes winter damage: freezing temperatures, cold winds, late frost, heaving. Hence it is difficult to determine what and when to protect (canes, bud union/from early winter on or late spring?)

If your shrub is healthy, it should survive the winter just fine. In the six weeks before the first hard freeze, give your roses a weekly "potassium feast" in each of those six weeks. Potassium blocks the growth-promoting effects of nitrogen and phosphorous, thereby hardening the canes in time for winter. (After a few weekly applications of liquid potassium, the canes and stems of the plants start turning red, as they harden off on their way to dormancy.) Organic options: compost, banana peels, blood meal, wood ash). Also, keep watering during winter’s dry spells.



Suggested winter protection:

- Clean the area of dead leaves and top layer of mulch. Cover graft union (10") using coarse materials which do not absorb or impede the flow of water (mulch/dry leaf mulch/christmas tree branches) after a good frost. This also prevents thawing and re-freezing (heaving). Remove mulch at the time of pruning (around March 15). Leaving the winter cover too long could cause canker problems or early growth within the cover. (I'd leave the winter cover nearby in case of early April freezing nights.)

December is a great month to transplant roses!! Give your shrub plenty of time to work on it's root system before it start's pushing for greenery and flower buds. Before moving the rose, shorten the canes to 1-2 feet. Make sure to water well for at least 3 weeks if there is no rain.

Watering in the Winter

Water roses often during dry spells, especially ones you have transplanted. It may not seem like it when it is cold, but roses need to stay well-hydrated all year long, not just when it is hot. Much winter damage can be prevented by not letting roses dry out over the winter.

Rose canes need water in the winter to keep the cambium cells hydrated when the soil is frozen and drying winter winds occur. If there is no rain for a week, give the roses a good soaking. Also, watering before a bad cold snap is beneficial as well.

Prepare your beds now for winter while the ground is not frozen (Wait 2 days after rain before digging.) Add compost, lime, CLM. This gives the bacteria, worms and microorganism a head start.)

Transplant

December is a great month to transplant roses!! Give your shrub plenty of time to work on it's root system before it start's pushing for greenery and flower buds.

Before moving the rose, shorten the canes to 1-2 feet.

Make sure to water well for at least 3 weeks if there is no rain.

Rose Pruning

Use sharp by-bass pruners and loppers! Disinfect!

Last's year's roses — prune to 12"–15" for more base growth!

Why is pruning needed:

To keep the shrub's size/shape under control. To improve air circulation. To promote new growth and bloom. The result will be a fuller, healthier shrub with younger, better-producing canes. (As the shrub ages, remove old canes as needed. Prune those all the way to the ground level.)

Shrubs (Knock Out, Drift, etc.)

1. **Prune in February down to about 12".** (If you want to keep the bush large, prune back 1/3 or 1/2 of the shrub.)
2. **Remove all dead and damaged canes.**
Look for discoloration, cankers etc.) If only part of the cane is damaged, cut below the damage. (The inside of a healthy cane is nice and white.)
3. **Remove a crossing/rubbing canes.**
4. Prune again in summertime as needed. The next flowering will be delayed; however, it will be that much showier. Do not just remove the dead flowers. . follow the stem down and you might even see a new shoot growing. Cut right above that.



Hybrid Teas/Grandifloras/Floribundas:

1. **Prune around mid-March.**
Timing is little tricky in GA. Prune too early and you might loose canes in late frost; prune too late and the plant loses energy in useless top growth. Mid-March is the best estimate.
2. **Remove all dead and damaged canes.**
Look for discoloration, cankers etc. If only part of the cane is damaged, cut below the damage. Make sure the inside of the cane is nice and white.
3. **Remove a crossing/rubbing canes.**
4. With grafted roses — remove sucker growth.
5. **Cut healthy canes back to 3-4 feet. (Can be cut shorter.) Create an open vase shape for best air circulation. Remove all the canes that are thinner than a pencil.** If you have a young shrub with thin canes, leave the thickest canes possible. If you leave "dog legs" or canes growing from the end of the main canes, be sure to leave at least 2 buds to support new growth.
6. **Pull out all the old leaves!** This helps to control insects and diseases and forces the rose into temporary dormancy which gives the plant time to adjust. Stripping also encourages new canes to grow.

Climbers

(First year climbers—only remove canes that are growing totally in wrong direction; for example, a cane that cannot be tied onto a trellis.)

How to train a climber onto a trellis/fence: Bend (a young, pliable) cane as horizontally as your space and its direction permit, and cut off any growth that extends beyond your area. (This will promote lateral branching). Continue to do this until you have all the major canes your support needs: perhaps one in each direction on each seat on a wood fence, or seven canes radiating out on a chain link fence.

You want to bend the canes horizontally because these are the primary cases, the structural part of the plant. They will not flower much. They will, however, put out short shoots (lateral branch) that will flower a ton. There will be more of these short shoots if the structural canes are horizontal, partly due to the increase in sunlight, partly the “traveling blooming hormone.”

Every year in late January or early February, you'll need to trim the plant back to near its structural canes and make any needed updates to the main canes.

1. **Cut out old and weak, misdirected, dead, or very damaged main canes.**

Remember that “brown” does not mean “dead,” it just means older and woody. If you are unsure, check if a cane is still alive by tracing. A cane can be alive but weak if it produced very little last year; these should go too.

2. **Train and tie up new major canes as needed.**

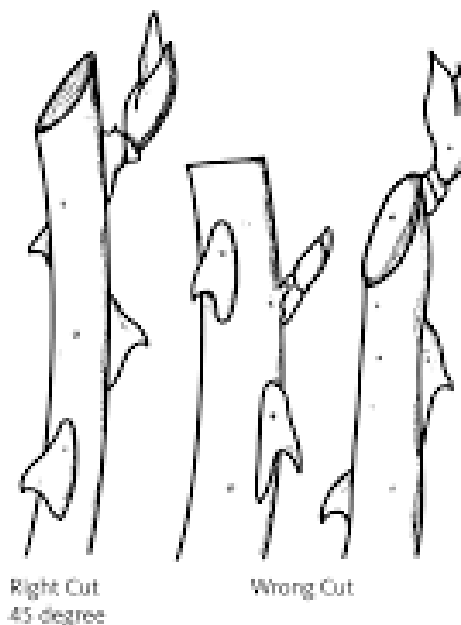
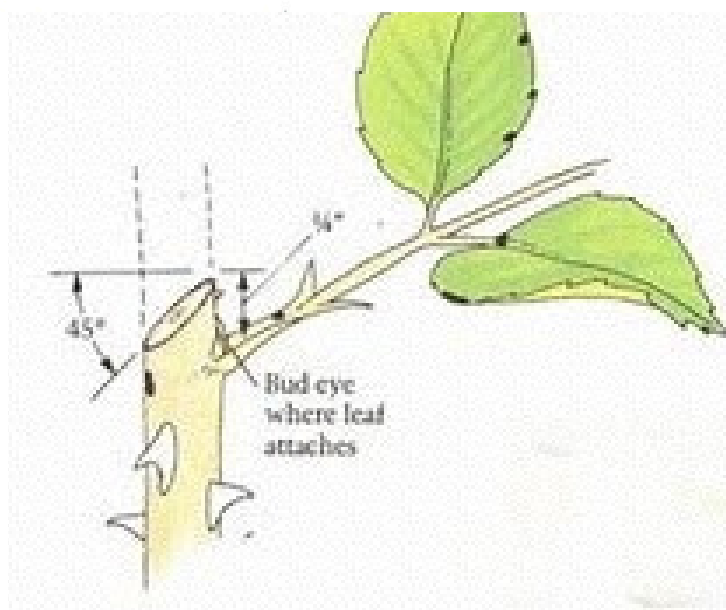
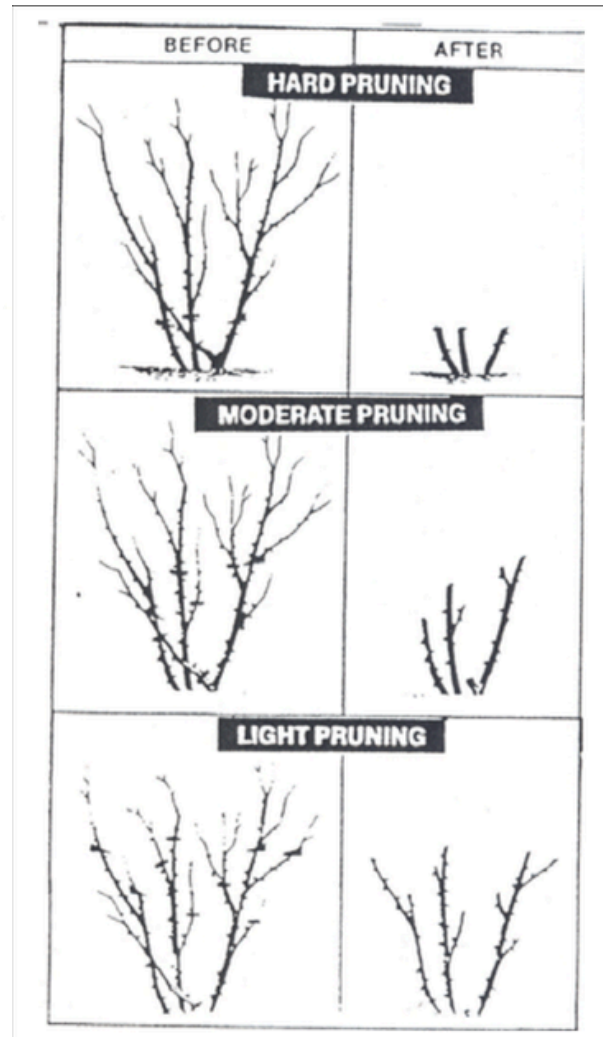
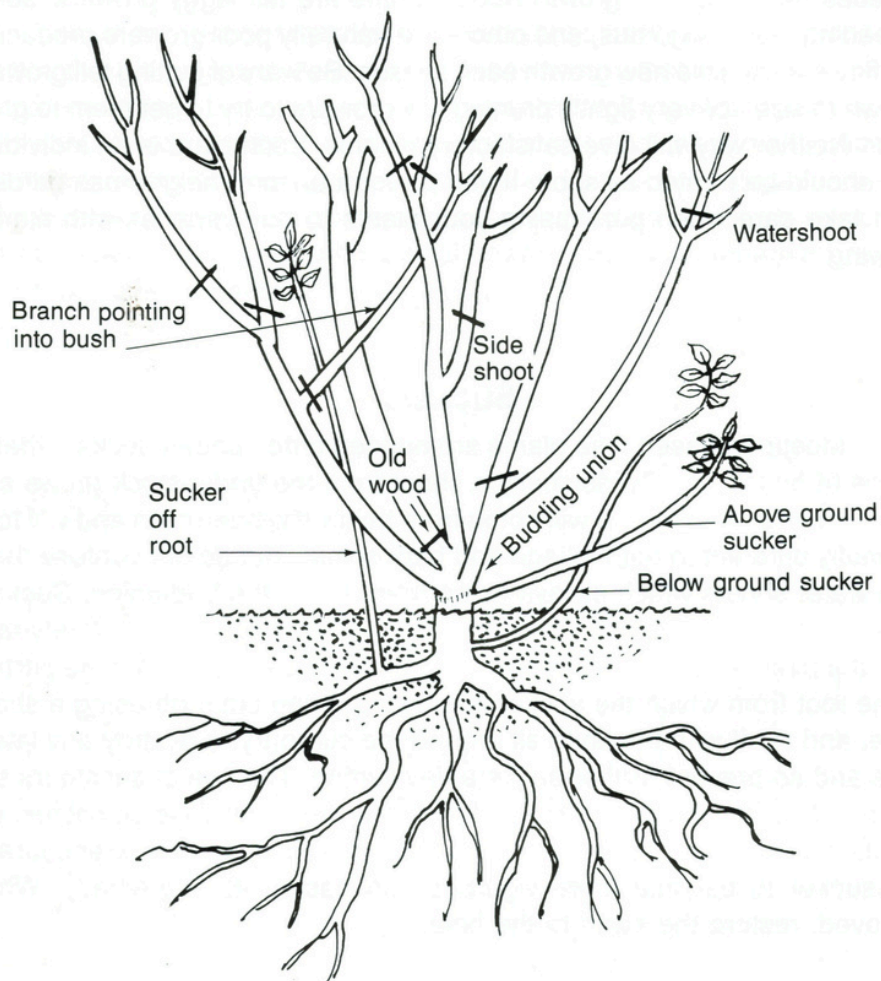
New major cases can replace old ones you had to cut down or can be directed to a new area of your growing space.

3. **Cut out all other unneeded major canes.**

These new major canes will often come from suckers from the plant base or bolting growth from another major cane. Those that are not useful to you should be removed from their bases.

4. **Cut all flowering shoots back to a few nodes from the main canes.** This will tidy the plant and make sure the flowering growth of next year is strong enough to hold the flowers. This can be done again after flowering throughout the season.

NOTE: CLIMBERS THAT BLOOM IN SPRING ONLY (e.g. the Lady Banks Rose and New Dawn)—PRUNE RIGHT AFTER THEY FLOWER.



Cutting—Make slanting cuts directly above a cane node. Try to select a node which faces the “outside” of the plant.