



Rose Pruning Tips and Tricks

Most rose bushes need a good tidy up in winter time and it is accepted that the coldest time of the year – around late July – is considered best. Exceptions to the rule are climbing roses which are generally pruned after they have flowered in spring and the yellow and white Banksia Roses which are pruned after their spring floral display. You may have pruned your roses already – don't worry too much. Remember these tips for next year!

One of the main reasons for pruning in mid winter is that the new growth will only slowly appear as the weather warms up. Tender, new growth from earlier prunings can become cold/frost affected.

What do you need? Clean sharp secateurs, a narrow bladed pruning saw or loppers, sturdy gloves and a sterilizing solution such as diluted household bleach to clean the tools between each plant. This helps prevent disease spread. Also a bucket to put the prunings in, diluted Yates Lime Sulphur and finally some cow manure.

One thing to remember: Roses are very tough plants and will endure any amount of bad or incorrect pruning. So...don't get worried if you make a mistake! They will forgive you! Here goes.....

- Cut out from the base any old canes
- Remove any twiggy, straggly and weak growth
- Aim to have an 'open' plant without too many cross over branches
- Cut back the remaining younger stems by at least one third or more
- Try and cut above an outward facing bud – this keeps the 'open' shape
- You will end up with 3-4 strong stems pruned back quite hard. Note that nothing should grow from below the graft
- Remove all old leaves – from on the plant and on the ground. These can be harboring the fungal spore of Rose Black Spot
- Dip your pruning tools in the disinfectant solution between each plant
- Rose prunings and leaves go in the waste bin and not the compost
- Spray the newly pruned plants with diluted Lime Sulphur to kill off fungal spores, scale and mites. If possible, spray the ground beneath the bushes
- Mulch with a small amount of cow manure. Fertilising will only start when the new growth appears in early spring
- Stand back and admire your handiwork!

Roses such as the Flower Carpet series can be pruned back hard with shears. They will respond really well if the strong growth from each season is cut right back – don't be scared!

Life's a garden – dig it!