



UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

# Agriculture & Natural Resources

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION • YOLO COUNTY

70 Cottonwood Street, Woodland, CA 95695 Tel. (530) 666-8143 Fax (530) 666-8736

## An Introduction to How To Prune Your Roses

Before you begin pruning, critically examine the rosebush. You are looking for the stems that you will keep to form an open-centered or vase-shaped bush. Next put on strong gloves to protect your hands and always prune using clean, sharp pruning shears (secateurs). Make all cuts at a 45° angle, approximately one inch above a bud that is facing the direction you would like the new growth to take. Always make a cut above a growing point such as a bud or a stem and never leave a stub. For stems larger than one half inch in diameter use a pruning saw. Begin by removing all dead, diseased, or damaged wood. The cut surface should be white. If it's brown – cut back further. Remove any thin stems and any branches that cross or rub against another. Remove suckers growing from below the union/graft because suckers have the qualities of the rootstock, and will not flower true to the grafted rose variety. **Remember:** Main pruning in our area is done in late winter or very early spring. Hard pruning usually results in fewer but larger flowers. Never treat a once-blooming rose like a repeat or ever-blooming rose because both require their own type of pruning.

**ONCE-BLOOMING ROSES** (species or old garden): Prune severely just as growth begins. Remove weak shoots along with dead and diseased wood. Remove thin, spindly, overcrowded shoots. Once blooming roses have produced a major flush of bloom they should be pruned back moderately to preserve an open, trim shape.

**EVER-BLOOMING ROSES** (recurrent or remontant): Encourage new growth by pruning somewhat severely just as growth begins. Make a slanting cut above a promising bud. If desired, encourage large plants by not pruning back too radically. Prune evenly to encourage new growth. In the summer cut all canes that have flowered by one-third to one-half. During the summer and fall, be sure to remove the entire flower truss down to the first healthy bud growing to the outside of the branch.

**Hybrid Tea Roses:** Cut back new plants to six-inch canes with two to four eyes each. Remove all but the strongest, most well-spaced canes leaving three to four healthy stems oriented in an open-centered or vase shape. Make slanted cuts ¼" above outward-facing buds.

**Shrub Roses:** Prune immediately after a major flush of bloom. Trim modestly to remove only superfluous shoots, damaged, diseased stems, and old wood.

**Climbing Roses:** These should not be pruned. Only remove exhausted canes and withered shoot tips. Tie or peg down long canes to induce flowering on lateral shoots along the length of the cane. Once in full bloom the only care required is deadheading or removing spent flower trusses.

---

*By S.L. Green*

*All contents copyright © 2001 The Regents of the University of California.*

The University of California prohibits discrimination against or harassment of any person employed by or seeking employment with the University on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or status as a covered veteran (covered veterans are special disabled veterans, recently separated veterans, Vietnam era veterans, or any other veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized). University policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws. Inquiries regarding the University's equal employment opportunity policies may be directed to the Affirmative Action/Staff Personnel Services Director, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 300 Lakeside Drive, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Oakland, CA 94612-3550, (510) 987-0096.



---

*University of California and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating*