

PRUNING CLIMBING ROSES

Climbing roses should be pruned for the same reasons you prune other roses; for plant vigor, for plant shape, and for abundant flower production. They are pruned a bit differently than other roses, however, and we hope you find these instructions helpful. As with any other pruning, you should begin with sharp, clean tools and it is advisable to water the plants the day before you begin pruning to lessen the shock to the plant.

Climbing roses are generally broken down into two categories, once-blooming and repeat-blooming, but regardless of their type, they bloom mainly on laterals that spring from the canes. In order to encourage them to put out more flowering laterals, train the canes as horizontally as possible. A trellis, fence, wires or arbor is ideal for this.

Young climbers (including climbing miniatures) under 2 or 3 years old should be pruned as little as possible, or not at all. The strong climbing shoots (canes) should be trained to fan out horizontally without allowing shoots to cross each other. They may be turned and bent into position and held into place onto the fence, wire or trellis with soft plant ties. The shoots coming from these canes are the flower producers. When the spent blossoms have been removed, these shoots may also be tied horizontally to the trellis and will in turn produce more flowering wood.

PRUNING ONCE-BLOOMING CLIMBING ROSES

This type of rose blooms gloriously, but only once a year and they usually bloom on wood from the previous year. Prune these roses right after flowering is finished. If the plant produced many canes, remove several of the oldest and weakest canes to the bud union. If only a few canes were produced, cut them back to several feet above the ground. Train these canes horizontally to your fence, wire or trellis. Winter pruning of these roses should be kept to only removing suckers coming from below the bud union, twiggy and dead growth, and leaves and rose hips (seed pods). Untie and rearrange canes into as horizontal a position as possible. (You can often tell if a climber blooms only once because many of the once-blooming roses have very flexible canes and small flowers borne in clusters.)

PRUNING REPEAT-BLOOMING CLIMBING ROSES

Climbers that are arranged horizontally on arbors, trellises or fences can bloom for many years on the same older canes. Eventually, if the roses decline in vigor, allow new canes to grow and replace the old ones. Repeat-blooming climbers are pruned in the winter or very early spring when the plants are dormant. Remove all suckers coming from below the bud union. Remove all dead or twiggy growth extending from the bud union. Cut all the flowering laterals that rise from the horizontal growing canes back to 2 or 3 buds. Remove all remaining leaves. Untie canes and reposition them on their support into as horizontal a position as possible.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST...FOR ALL ROSES

Once all the pruning is finished in the winter, rake up and dispose of all the dead leaves and ground litter and spray your newly pruned roses with a dormant spray to eliminate over-wintering pests and promote healthy plants. For all roses it is important to remove all leaves from the plant and all prunings from around the base of the plant. This practice will help control the spread of such diseases like powdery mildew, black spot, rust, and botrytis blight.