

PRUNING FLORIBUNDA AND POLYANTHA ROSES

Since floribunda roses produce clusters of flowers and are grown mainly for garden display rather than cut flowers, the method for pruning them varies slightly from the method used for pruning hybrid tea roses. Often they are pruned only to control the size, shape and health of the plants. If pruned too heavily, growth will decline; if it is too light, the bush will be large and lack vigor. Many floribundas, though, benefit from annual pruning in which three to five canes remain in a vase-shaped configuration.

You should remove all dead or weak canes and cut back about one-fourth to one-third of the current year's growth. Taking off more of the growth will produce fewer, but larger, blooms; taking off less will produce more, but smaller, ones. Cut the center branch from each cluster of branches, and cut the remaining ones back to 3 or 4 undeveloped growth buds. If you have a hedge of one variety, cut all plants to a uniform height.

Polyantha roses are similar to floribundas in that they produce many small canes and clusters of small blooms (under 2 inches). Remove all dead canes and prune the remaining ones very lightly, removing no more than one-fourth to one-third of the growth.