

## BALDO'S ROSE PRUNING TIPS FOR THE SACRAMENTO AREA

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### Definition - "to prune"

1. To lop or cut off the superfluous parts, branches, or shoots of (a plant) for better shaped or more fruitful growth;
2. To shape by trimming;
3. To cut off or cut out (as dead branches from a rosebush).

**Best Time to Prune:** Mid December - Mid February

### Why Prune?

1. To remove unproductive growth e.g., old, damaged, diseased or dead wood and twiggy growth.
2. To encourage new canes from the bud union which is usually regarded as strong evidence of good plant health and vigor.
3. To shape the rosebushes for the spring bloom.
4. NOTE: In colder climates, the removal of dead and diseased wood from winterkill may be the main pruning activity

### What Happens if you Don't Prune?

1. Waiting too long risks the danger of the buds breaking dormancy.
2. Plants may become unproductive because of excess dead, diseased and damaged canes.
3. Fungal diseases may sicken the plant early in the season.
4. Twiggy growth will not support large blooms.
5. The plants will be unshapely with small, unattractive blooms

### Pruning Tools

1. Be current with your Tetanus shots (booster every 10 years) and to have a First Aid kit nearby.
2. A pair of sharp bypass hand pruning shears.
3. A pair of long handled lopping shears to cut out thick canes.
4. A fine tooth folding pruning saw to cut large canes or stubs from the budunion.
5. A good pair of gloves
  - a. Leather gloves – goatskin gloves resist punctures from rose prickles better
  - b. Nitrile-coated canvas gloves – keeps hands dry if you are working with wet soil.
6. Elbow length Gauntlet Gloves or canvas sleeves – protects the arms.
7. A spray can of Lysol Disinfectant to clean your pruning tools.

### Pruning Tips

1. Newly planted roses should be pruned very lightly just to remove dead, diseased, broken, damaged, or twiggy growth (=thin canes that are incapable of supporting a bloom).
2. The goal is to encourage new replacement canes from the budunion/crown
3. Always start your pruning at the budunion/crown and work up the plant, one cane at a time.
4. Remove old canes and leave newer replacement canes.
  - **New canes:** New canes: Bark is green and smooth; prickles are brownish.

- b. **Old canes:** Bark is gray and rough or split or corky; prickles are gray to whitish in color
- 5 Always cut to good healthy tissue which can be recognized by the smooth green bark on the outside of the cane and white pith in the center revealed after the cut is made.
  - 6 direction of the growth is determined by the direction that the buds point.
  - 7 Make the cuts about ¼ - ½ inch above a bud eye; the angle of the cut is irrelevant.
  - 8 Open up the center of the plant in order to improve air circulation.
  - 9 Cutting back the height of the plant is a matter of personal preference and whether you are planning to use the roses for garden display or for exhibition. Minor pruning produces more but smaller blooms.

### The Pruning Process

1. Expose the budunion/crown of the plant - remove mulch, fallen leaves. Starting at the budunion/crown of the plant:
  - a. Remove DEAD, DISEASED, DAMAGED CANES.
  - b. Remove CROSSING or canes that are RUBBING other canes.
  - c. Remove any SUCKER GROWTH which grows from below the budunion; own root plants don't produce suckers.
  - d. IDENTIFY PRODUCTIVE BASAL CANES and cut off UNPRODUCTIVE and TWIGGY growth.
2. Inspect each remaining cane starting from the base up and remove any dead, diseased, damaged and twiggy laterals.
3. Top off the cane when the desired height is reached or in climbers and some shrubs when the cane becomes twiggy.
4. Leave as many thick laterals and sublaterals as long as they do not interfere with main canes or other laterals. Top off the laterals at the desired height or when the thickness of the lateral is pencil thick.
5. Cut or saw off all stubs from the budunion/crown to enable new cane growth (=basal canes) to come from the crown. **DO NOT BRUSH THE BUDUNION!!**
6. After pruning has been completed, remove any remaining foliage from the canes and clean up weeds from around the bushes and rose beds; crown should be left uncovered and free of mulch.
7. Don't waste your time sealing the ends of pruned canes in order to prevent "cane borers". Cane borers are predatory wasps that hunt aphids for food. By controlling the aphids, you can lessen the damage of damage of these insects by keeping aphids under control during the growing season!

### To Dormant Spray or NOT

If signs of fungal diseases, aphids, scale insects, or spidermites were noted while pruning, the roses should be sprayed with a general rose fungicide and/or with a general insecticide for insect pests. For spidermite control, always read the label of the pesticide as only a few products control spidermites.

*Edited by Baldo Villegas 2016Jan16*