

Learning **PRUNE**: Pruning is not only for looks, but to improve air circulation and health of the plant. It is extremely difficult to kill a rose bush, so be brave! Think of **PRUNE** as an acronym:

- P** • **Prepare** the plant & yourself - Cut the plant back so you can work safely. Generally taller plants should be cut down to approximately waist height before spring pruning. This will make your plant more manageable. Use common sense – don't do this to your large climbers!
  - Get your pruners out (bypass hand pruners & loppers) and wear appropriate gloves and clothing that won't get easily snagged by thorns.
  - If you have bushes with heavy dead canes protruding from the base, a small pruning saw or "sawsall" can be very helpful to remove that dead wood.
  
  - R** • **Remove** all broken, dead, dying or diseased wood – begin at the bottom so you are not wasting time pruning a cane that is rotting at the base. Healthy canes are brown or green and firm.
  - Also, remove canes that are crossing and rubbing, which can create weak spots. See photo below indicating a solution for separating two canes using a small section of a sturdy pruned cane to hold them apart.
  
  - U** • **Understand** the plant – what kind are you pruning? What do you want the bush to look like after it grows out?
  - Shape the plant to meet your needs – is it hitting the side of the house, blocking a walkway? Has it grown too tall for you to care for, etc...? You are the architect.
  - Make your final cuts at a 45-degree angle and about 1/4 inch above outward facing bud eyes (the angle is the least important aspect here).
  
  - N** • **Nothing** left behind - clean up all cuttings, dead leaves and other debris from around the plant, helping to minimize the growth of diseases.
  - Do not add rose leaves/cuttings to your home compost, as this could potentially spread pathogens. Dispose in food & yard composting bins where the composting process is done at temperatures that will kill any pathogens.
  
  - E** • **Enjoy** the roses in your garden or cut your roses and bring them inside – you are actually continuing to prune your bushes by cutting and deadheading them during the growing season, keeping them happy and healthy. Begin fertilizing when the soil warms in the spring. A general guideline is that new growth should be at least two to three inches long – you are otherwise wasting your fertilizer!
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A 2" piece of pruned cane is used to wedge two rubbing canes away from each other. Eventually they will stay apart even after the wedging is removed.



This rose has had major surgery! Old, decayed canes have been removed from the crown.



These two roses will ultimately have two different looks. The one on the left is a shorter variety, so is pruned to about knee height. The one on the right will ultimately reach shoulder level and is pruned to thigh height.