Rose Pruning in the Rockies

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General Rose Culture

- Pruning is just one part of good rose culture
- Pruning is easier if plants are growing well
- Pruning stimulates new growth, good culture helps that growth thrive!
USDA Growing Zones
Minimum Temperature Hardiness Guide

- Zone 1: Below -50°F
- Zone 2: -50°F
- Zone 3: -40°F
- Zone 4: -30°F
- Zone 5: -20°F
- Zone 6: -10°F
- Zone 7: 0°F
- Zone 10: +30°F

- Most roses are “rated” by zone
- Rose hardiness ranges from Zones 2 to 8
- Zones 5 & 6 most common
  - These roses commonly suffer severe canopy die-back during winter
Learn About Your Plants

Fully Winter Hardy

Less than 1/2 dieback
zones 2 & 3

Semi – Winter Hardy

More than 1/2 dieback –
often to the ground

Normal for hybrid teas &
floribundas, zones 5 & 6
Equipment

Saw, Loppers, Water-proof Glue, Pruning Shears

By-pass Pruners
Pruning Basics

- **Rule # 1**: Pruning stimulates growth
- **Rule # 2**: Do Not Be Afraid!
- **Rule # 3**: First prune around last frost
- Encourage roses to grow when it is safe

Tetanus shot up to date!
TLC & The 6 “D’s” Of Rose Pruning

• T.L.C.
  – Thoughtful Learning to Care about how your plants grow, and why
The Six “D’s” of Pruning

Begin by removing:

• Dead
• Damaged
• Diseased

Make way for new, healthy growth

Can you identify what needs to be cut out?
The Six “D’s” of Pruning

Remove Damaged & Diseased
The Six “D’s” of Pruning

Then remove:
• Dinky
• Diagonal

Do this all summer

Rubbing canes will damage each other

“Dinky” growth wastes energy and never flowers
The Six “D”’s of Pruning

Throughout the season, prune to achieve:

• Design

‘William Baffin,’ trained to a post
Types of Roses That Bloom Once

- Species (Wild)
- Old Garden Roses
  - Alba, Damask, etc.
- Climbers
  - Ramblers

*Rosa rubrifolia*
‘The Red Leaf Rose’
Littleton War Memorial Garden
Pruning Once Blooming Roses

- Single year-long blooming cycle
- Pruning in spring prevents flowers
- Prune immediately after flowering (July)

Deadheading may prevent hips
A Notorious Once Bloomer

Rootstock
- ‘Dr. Huey’
- Most common rose rootstock
Emerging Rootstock

- Rootstock shoots need to be torn from their source beneath the graft union.
Key !!

- Plant grafted roses 2-4” below ground level
- Proper planting plus winter protection will:
  - Reduce root stock “suckers”
  - Help grafted roses overwinter
- Plant own-root roses 1-2” below ground level
Pruning Winter Hardy Roses

• Remove:
  – Dead stems
  – Weak growth

• Thin:
  – Open center for better air flow

• In general:
  – Cut back by 1/3 to promote max bloom

• Get out of the way

‘Winnipeg Parks,’ Zone 3
‘Sally Holmes,’
A Zone 5 Shrub

February

Late April, after pruning to best growth

Early June
Fall Pruning

- Deadhead beneath flower head in September
- End late in the month

- A year of basal breaks
  - Spring, early summer
    - Great!! Love ‘em!
  - Fall
    - Boo!! Break them off!
Cold Weather Considerations

- Low Temperatures
  - Zone 5 (to - 20° F)
- Winter Winds
  - Desiccation of canes
- Drought / Winter water
- Freeze / Thaw cycles

‘Eglantyne’
Which Roses Need Protection?

- All first year roses – recommended
- Semi-hardy roses:
  - Hybrid Teas and Grandifloras - most yes
  - Floribundas - most yes
- Climbers - depends on variety

‘Magic Carousel’
Winter Protection

Mounded Compost or Soil

Evergreen Boughs

Rose Collar

Proper planting & winter protection = happy roses in spring!
Here They Come !!

Semi-hardy hybrid teas “breaking” from the base in late April/early May
Think Of A Soda Straw

- Healthy tissue passes the most water and nutrients
- Damaged pith impedes passage
- Which straw would you rather drink from?
Pruning Process – for Winter Damaged Roses

• Remove dead and diseased canes

• Cut along damaged canes to healthy new growth

• **Fourth Rule**: Cut to the ground if needed
Cut Back To Good Growth

Pith should be healthy and fresh
Although this cane used stored energy to leaf out, it was too damaged at the base to survive.
Unpruned Damaged Growth

Cut it now, or cut it later (August)
Pruning Cuts

Healthy bud sprout

Note scar where old leaf was attached

Bud sprouting above leaf stipule
Pruning & Deadheading

Cut at a 45 degree angle
¼ inch above outward facing bud

Cut too high

Cut too low may injure or kill new bud growth

Correct cut

Slant the cut away from the bud
Stem Length

- Mother Nature’s pruning technique
- Excess length can be trimmed later
Avoid Cutting Too Short

This bud does not have enough stem space to thrive
Summer Mulch Injury

In summer, mulch should not touch base of plant
Remove Dead Growth At The Base

Use loppers and branch saws when necessary

Seal all cuts made at base
Pith Nesting Insects

Bees nest in canes, provide pollen and nectar to young

Remedy - Seal the ends of cuts with glue, or colored finger nail polish
Pith Nesters

The center of this bush has died; make cuts to ground and seal ends
‘Let Freedom Ring,’ Hybrid Tea

- Early May
- Note very healthy new growth at base
- Can any of the growth on old stems be trusted?
Pruning Hybrid Teas
“Let Freedom Ring”

Despite new growth, stem is too damaged to remain
Pruning Hybrid Teas

• Note difference between fresh growth, and old, clogged cane
Pruning Hybrid Teas

Cut away the old To reveal the new

New growth on right should be shaded until it hardens off
Hybrid Teas & Floribundas

What you’ll find:

- Often much winter damage
- Responds to good care
- Grows back fast
- Winter protection of base important

Concentrate on:

- Pruning to good wood crucial for best flowers and health
- Common to cut near ground – seal cuts
- Graft union must be below ground (2-4”)

What you’ll find:
The 7th “D”: Dead-Heading

- Hybrid Teas:
  - Best new bud eyes at base of 5-leaflet leaves
- Most other roses:
  - New growth has often started by the time you deadhead
Deadheading

With floribundas and many shrubs, cut to new growth for quickest re-flower
New Bud Eyes

Note new bud eye in leaf axil

Did I cut this too short??
Repeat Bloom Climbers

- Climbing canes - structure
- Lateral (blooming canes)
- Train (tie up) to support
- Arch climbing canes to promote more bloom
- Prune laterals to promote re-bloom

‘Improved Blaze’
Repeat Bloom Climbers

- Arch (train) climbing canes to produce more laterals
  - Note cane at top of fence
- New cane at left will be trained as it matures
- Pruning hack:
  - Growth at base is not that healthy, it was removed after flowering (July)

‘Improved Blaze’
Hardy Climbers
Make your life easier!!

‘Ramblin’ Red’

‘John Davis’

‘John Cabot’
Final Pruning Tips

• Pruning too early
  – New growth may grow into late frost
  – Frosted growth near ground may injure plant
• Fall pruning discouraged
  – Rose growth must be fully stopped (usually Nov.)
Questions ????

Chihuly sculpture in the rose garden at Denver Botanic Gardens

Thank You