

# Rose Pruning

## Roses truly benefit from proper, purposeful pruning:

- ❖ Keeps the plant healthy, promotes new growth, removes dead, broken or diseased canes, and/or trains the plant to a desired shape
- ❖ Encourages flowering (either more blooms or larger blooms)
- ❖ Keeps modern rose varieties blooming repeatedly all summer long
- ❖ Improves plant health by increasing air movement through the plant's foliage
- ❖ Roses 3 years old and younger should be only lightly pruned, if at all

You will need clean, sharp tools: bypass-type hand pruners, loppers, and possibly a pruning saw for larger cuts.

## Pruning that all roses need

- ❖ Remove all dead, damaged or weak stems leaving only the most vigorous, healthy canes
- ❖ Remove dead wood to the crown, or to the nearest healthy bud
- ❖ If there are no live buds, remove the entire branch or cane to the base of the plant
- ❖ Pith (located in the center of the stem) should be creamy white, not brown or gray, on healthy, live wood
- ❖ If the inside of the stem is brown, prune the cane back farther, at least one inch below the dead area
- ❖ Prune the bush to make it more open in the center—will increase air circulation and help prevent diseases
- ❖ Make pruning cuts above a leaf bud facing **out** from the center of the plant—new growth comes from the bud just below a pruning cut
- ❖ Make a cut ¼-inch above the bud and angled at the same angle as the bud
- ❖ Whenever two canes cross each other, one should be removed
- ❖ Removal of growth into walking paths, etc.
- ❖ All major pruning should be done in late winter, just as buds break dormancy—just as they begin to swell and become visible
- ❖ All pruning cuts on canes greater than the thickness of a pencil may be sealed with wood glue to prevent cane borers from entering

## Hybrid Teas, Floribundas and Grandifloras (prune as in illustration)

- ❖ Prune out all suckers emerging from below the graft
- ❖ Prune hard (far back) for fewer but larger blooms; less hard for more but smaller blooms
- ❖ General recommendation: cut out all but three to five of the healthiest, most vigorous canes—prune these canes down to 15 to 18 inches from ground level
- ❖ Remove any canes thinner than a pencil
- ❖ In the late summer/early fall, prune back by about 1/3 of their height to encourage vigorous autumn blooms

## Climbing Roses (make cuts as in illustration, but do not prune entire plant as in illustration)

- ❖ Except for dead or diseased growth, do not prune until **after** flowering (bloom only once, on wood from the previous year's growth)
- ❖ After flowering: prune out all weak or damaged stems and removed the oldest canes, leaving five to seven strong canes untouched

**Shrub Roses** (make cuts as in illustration, but do not prune entire plant as in illustration)

- ❖ Shrub roses should be pruned in late winter, like other modern roses
- ❖ Remove up to 1/3 of the canes the oldest, woodiest stems—cutting them back to the plant's crown, and up to 1/3 of the height

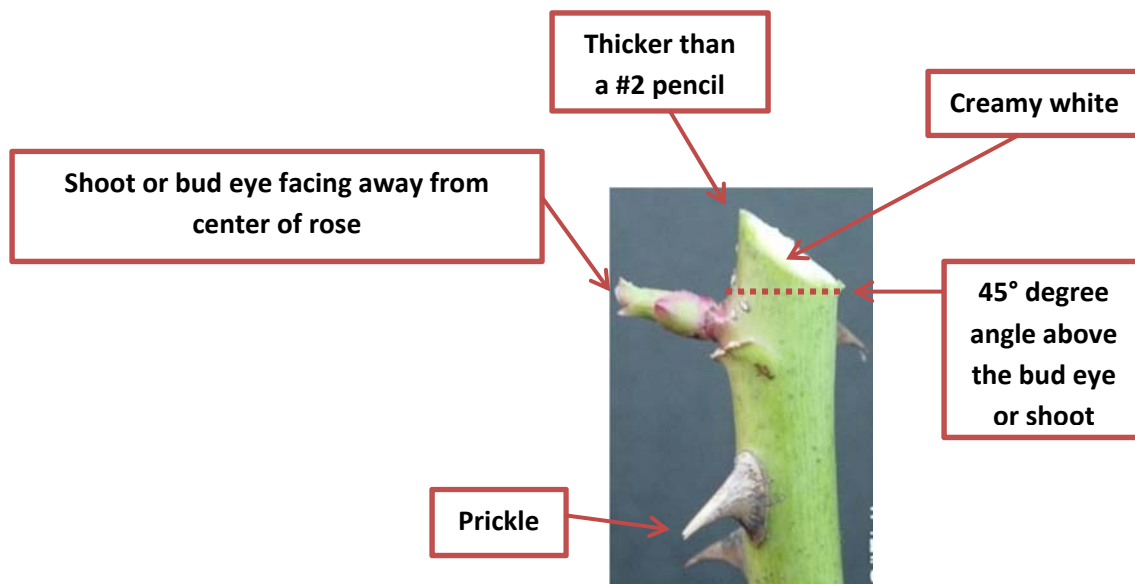
**Old Garden (Antique) Roses** (make cuts as illustration, but do not prune entire plant as in illustration)

- ❖ Most only bloom once in a season—prune immediately after bloom to keep old roses under control
- ❖ Do not need hard pruning—can ruin their graceful shape and severely reduce their flowering
- ❖ Remove no more than 1/3 of each bush; generally, remove only the oldest stems that are no longer productive
- ❖ If you like, leave some of the right red hips (fruits) for fall and winter color

### Deadheading

- ❖ Cutting off old, faded flowers to encourage formation of new flowers
- ❖ The first few leaves behind the flower will have only 3-leaflets. Remove the flower (or group of flowers) by making a diagonal cut just above the next 5 or 7-leaflet leaf down on the stem
- ❖ Cut should be made above a strong bud that will produce a healthy new cane

## The “Perfect” Cut



**El Paso Master Gardener Help Desk – (915) 771-2354**

**Or**

**Email us at: [elpasomg@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:elpasomg@ag.tamu.edu)**