

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 or smooth by trimming;
3. To cut off or cut out.

Best Time to Prune: Mid December - Mid February

Why Prune?

1. To remove unproductive growth e.g., old, damaged, diseased or dead wood as well as twiggy growth.
2. To encourage new basal growth from the crown or bud union regarded as 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 into February 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 too 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 and to have a First Aid kit nearby.
2. A pair of sharp, bypass or slicing type quality hand pruning shears/pruners.
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 are probably best
 - 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 disinfect your pruning tools; a can of WD40 to clean and lubricate your 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 crown or budunion.
3. Remove old canes and leave newer replacement canes
4. New canes: Bark is green and smooth; prickles are brownish; Old canes: Bark is gray and rough or split or corky; prickles are gray to white
5. Always cut to good healthy tissue which can be recognized by the smooth green bark on the outside of the cane and

whitish pith in the center revealed after the cut is made.

6. The 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 plan to use the roses for garden display or for exhibition

The Pruning Process

1. Expose the budunion/crown of the plant - remove mulch, fallen leaves. Always start your pruning at the crown or budunion and work up the plant, one cane at a time.
 - a. Remove any SUCKER GROWTH which grows from below the budunion; own root plants don't produce suckers.
 - b. Identify productive basal canes (i.e., growing from crown/budunion) and cut off unproductive growth
 - c. Cut off DEAD, DISEASED, DAMAGED AND UNPRODUCTIVE canes!
 - d. Cut off or trim back twiggy canes so they can support good size roses.
 - e. Cut off crossing or canes that are rubbing with one another.
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 in climbers and some shrubs when the lateral cane becomes twiggy.
5. Cut or saw off all stubs from the budunion/crown to enable new cane growth (=basal canes) to grow from the crown. **DO NOT BRUSH THE BUDUNION!!**
6. After pruning has been completed, remove any remaining foliage from the canes and clean up 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". Instead, keep 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 the appropriate pesticide. Make sure that you read the label instructions of the pesticide and follow the label recommendations. For most dormant sprays, it is not a good idea to spray if rain is forecasted within 24 hours.

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