

ROSE PRUNING

Cedric Foster

Winter pruning of roses is not difficult. **Rose plants produce their flowers on new growth.** The purpose of pruning is to increase the amount and vigour of the new growth to obtain more and better flowers.

Repeat Flowering Roses (those that flower more than once a year):

Generally, about 70% to 80% of the plant should be cut off and its height should be reduced by about half (from above the union for 'standards'). How this is done is less important. Older parts of the plant which have grown less in the previous season can be shortened to a vigorous stem or removed. Any basal shoots that produced branches in the previous year should be retained.

The older parts of 'bush' and 'standard' roses can be distinguished by observing the number of eyes (dormant buds) left on stems of pencil thickness or larger. On older parts of the plant, the eyes will have already grown. Where this growth has become weak it will only get weaker and less productive.

'Ground cover roses' will perform best if nearly all the top is cut off. This is easy to do if done every winter and is very effective. Shearing off 50% of these roses is much less effective.

Repeat Flowering Climbers:

These should be pruned in winter by shortening all flowering spurs to 2 growth eyes. All new canes should be carefully bent to a sloping angle. To prevent stiff canes breaking off, tie them firmly in 2 places a little above their source. Cut the ends back to pencil thickness. Cut off sections of old canes where some flowering spurs are dead or dying. New canes flower in their second year.

Once Flowering Roses (weepers, ramblers and some 'old type' roses):

These should not be pruned in winter. They should be tidied up and pruned immediately after flowering. Do not remove more than 25% foliage.



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