

# THE ROSE PETAL

A Member of the American Rose Society

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## (Past) President's Message:

Happy New Year! With vaccinations underway, we are hoping to be able to start meeting again in April or May. Through the end of March the Mounts is not allowing indoor meetings, so in February and March we will continue with the virtual meetings. Although we all miss actual in-person meetings, by doing the virtual meeting we can get out-of-state speakers that would not be able to travel here to give a presentation. However, this month, on Saturday, January 23, we will be meeting in-person for a pruning seminar. It will be outdoors at the Mounts Botanical Garden. See the related article in this newsletter for all the details. Attendance is limited to 15 and you must make an advance reservation.



On April 10, we are hoping to be able to have an informal rose show at the Wellington Mall. We had hoped to put on a full ARS judged show, but not being able to have in-person planning meetings makes it more difficult to organize that type of show. The more informal show, which we have called a "Rose Festival" in the past, is a way to display our roses to the public and encourage them to start growing roses. Look for more information in next month's *Rose Petal*.

If you have not sent in your dues to renew your membership for 2021, please do so now, or if you are attending the pruning seminar you could pay then. Payment by check is best. It should be mailed to Bob Ewart, 455 NW 10th Street, Boca Raton, FL 33432. Regular dues are \$18, or \$25 to get the "Contributing Member" status. The extra \$7 goes to things like buying fertilizer for the rose garden at the Mounts.

**PRUNING SEMINAR, Saturday January 23 @ 9 AM**

We are approaching the time of year that is best for pruning your roses in south Florida. To help you in that endeavor we will have an outdoor in-person presentation. **A face covering must be worn during the entire time.** The demonstration will be followed with a chance to prune a rose bush. We will also be applying a time-release fertilizer to help the bushes put out lots of new growth. This is all happening on Saturday, January 23, at 9 AM at the rose garden at the Mounts Botanical Garden. The rose garden is located just inside the main entrance to the Mounts Botanical Garden (west side of Military Trail, between Southern Blvd. and Belvedere Road). In order to maintain social distancing we are limiting the number of attendees to 15, so reserve a place by emailing Bill Langford at [WHL2@prodigy.net](mailto:WHL2@prodigy.net) or call him at 561 309 8736. If you get voicemail, leave a message, and he will get back to you. Upon arrival, attendees will be checked in by garden personnel (who will have a list) and your temperature will be taken. If you have viral symptoms, you will not be admitted. But there will be no admission charge for attendees either, and you may spend time after the seminar enjoying the rest of the garden.

Please bring gloves and pruners. Goat skin gloves are best, but if you do not have any, a heavy work glove is a second option. Fabric garden gloves will not protect you from thorns! You may also wish to wear a heavy long sleeve shirt to prevent pricks when reaching into large bushes. We will split into three groups to watch the pruning demonstration, so that there will be a maximum of five people in each group, and social distancing can be maintained. There will be three Consulting Rosarians doing the pruning demonstration, one for each group.

You may also wish to bring water with you. We will not have refreshments like we used to when we met in person, but we will be selling raffle tickets. We will raffle off a couple of easy care rose bushes and a 2021 ARS Handbook for Selecting Roses.

**There will be no virtual 4th Monday meeting in January.** The pruning event will take place instead of the regular meeting. If we have to cancel the seminar due to inclement weather, we will try again for the following Saturday.

**PRUNING - it's that time again!**

Because our focus this month is on pruning our roses to bring even more delights in the coming months, I am borrowing a few articles from the newsletters of Rose Societies which have similar seasonal temperatures to ours. I hope you learn from and enjoy them. I welcome feedback from our readers.



## Directing Traffic in the Rose Garden

By Rita Perwich, Master Gardener and Consulting Rosarian [ritaperwich@gmail.com](mailto:ritaperwich@gmail.com)

What does “directing traffic” have to do with rose pruning? This is the phrase master rosarian Sue Streeper uses when she teaches her pruning workshop in Balboa Park. When we prune our roses, we guide the direction of their growth, their shape and size, the quality of their blooms and their health and vigor for the coming year. Pruning gives our roses the green light and sets them in motion to grow and bloom.

### We Direct them to Become Productive

Pruning prompts our roses to resume strong growth. We start at the base of the plant and prune out dead, damaged, diseased and old unproductive canes by sawing down at the base of the plant (known as the bud union on a grafted plant). This encourages and opens up space for the growth of basal breaks which will become the new and more productive canes. In San Diego, we prune our roses in late December and January.

### We Direct the Shape and Size of the Plant

We purposefully open up the center of the plant to air circulation and light which helps to minimize fungal diseases. There is a bud eye at every leaflet set. We “direct traffic” by making our cuts one-quarter of an inch above a bud eye that is outward facing. This prompts the rose to grow in that outward direction and away from its center. How much to prune? This depends on the type of rose.

Different classes of roses have varying pruning needs. In San Diego, usually we do not prune more than one-third to one-half off our hybrid teas. With floribundas, polyanthas, shrub roses and minifloras and miniatures we generally cut back only one-quarter of the height of the plant and we do not remove as many canes and as much growth as we do on the hybrid teas. Old garden roses that bloom only once need just a light grooming after their flowering has finished, and very little pruning in January other than the removal of old and dead growth.

Climbing roses are pruned very differently from other roses. The main canes are not pruned unless they are dead or damaged. Climbers bloom off lateral shoots so this is a good time to train new, flexible canes horizontally as much as possible in order to encourage lateral growth. Your cuts are made at the third or fourth bud eye on each of the lateral shoots growing off the main canes.

### We Direct the Quality and Size of the Blooms

On hybrid teas we want one large bloom per stem so after the described basic clean-out of dead, damaged and twiggy growth, we generally get rid of stem-on-stems, also known as “dog-legs”, and then we cut back to an outside bud -eye on a cane that is thick enough to support the desired future bloom. We can leave some of these branching dog-legs on floribundas and shrubs, but we do need to get to a stem diameter that will support the quality of blooms or cluster of blooms we want. Next we look for an outward facing bud-eye to make our pruning cut.

*Continued on p.4*



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*Beverley, before and after pruning.*

### **We Direct their Health**

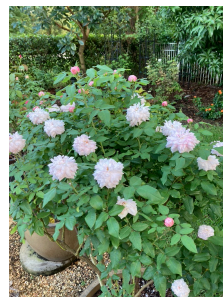
We already cut out the dead, diseased and damaged canes but if we notice that the pith in the center of an otherwise healthy-looking cane is brown, we keep pruning down the cane until we reach creamy white healthy tissue. Pruning at the start of the new year has the added bonus of ridding the garden of last year's problems. After pruning our roses, we strip all remaining leaves and we dispose of all canes and clippings to get rid of dormant spores of fungi and over-wintering pests. If we decide to dormant spray with horticultural oil or insecticidal soap this must be done immediately after pruning and before any bud eyes develop as the spray can harm them.

### **Direction Is Best with the Right Tools**

Pruning is made a lot easier when we have the right tools. We need a good sharp pair of bypass pruners, sturdy gauntlet gloves, a small pruning saw to make clean, flush cuts and a sharp pair of loppers to cut through thicker canes. It is a good idea to wear a long-sleeve shirt. When we are finished, we need a rake to clean around the base of the roses to remove all leaves and clippings from the garden.

This January, direct your roses into motion by pruning them and then admire them as they do the rest.

Below, in Kathy's & Bob's garden today, left to right: St Patrick, Veteran's Honor, Lotus Born, and Litchfield Angel.



## PLANTING

(Excerpt of a terrific article by Rita Perwich, San Diego RS newsletter Jan 2021)

Welcome new roses to their new home by planting them properly which will give them a good start and the best opportunity to grow vigorously and bloom prolifically through the year. Follow these five easy steps:

- 1) Location, location, location: Choose a spot that gets at least 5 to 6 hours of sun each day. Do not plant roses under or too close to trees. Make sure you know how large your rose will be at maturity and space accordingly.
- 2) Preparing the Rose Hole: Dig a hole about 12 to 18 inches deep and 2 feet wide. Your soil needs to have good drain- age. In soils with poor drainage, consider growing in raised beds or growing in containers. If you are planting a new rose in a hole where you have removed another rose, make sure all the old roots are removed and replace about one-half to two-thirds of the soil with a rose planting mix purchased from the nursery.
- 3) Preparing your Rose: Most roses received in the mail will arrive bare root. Unpack the rose from the sawdust or newspaper. Examine and cut only the broken roots. Cut out only damaged or very spindly canes. Hydrate the entire bare root rose (canes and roots) in a bucket of water for at least 24 hours. Some nurseries pot up their rose plants for sale. If there is already new leaf growth on the canes, leave the plant in the container until it grows a firm rootball. I like to buy my bare root roses as soon as they become available at the nursery so I can bring them home to soak them first before planting them in the ground.
- 4) Plant the Rose: Build up the soil you dug out of the hole by mixing in a purchased compost or well-rotted home- made compost. In San Diego we plant the rose so that the bud union is above ground level. Form a raised mound in the middle of your planting hole, and place the plant on top of the mound so that the bud union is several inches above the ground level. Add the amended soil back into the hole and tamp lightly with your hands. Create a basin around the planting hole and water well to saturate the plant. Do not allow the soil, or the mulch you will add in February, to cover the bud union or the canes.



- 5) Care after Planting: Sometimes Mother Nature will provide us with water in January. If there are no rains, make sure your newly planted rose is well irrigated.

## Pruning Roses: Why?

*By our own Master Consulting Rosarian, Mike Becker*

Pruning roses seems, for most people, to be an endeavor that causes much unnecessary apprehension and even fear. Whether from lack of knowledge, not wanting to cut off beautiful roses, or simply being afraid of doing something wrong, it is a process that new rosarians are reluctant to do. Although roses have been around for a long time and have managed to survive without our help, the little amount of time we can spend pruning our roses can result in a much healthier bush and a provide us with many beautiful roses as a reward.

There are several periods that we prune roses. The first is in the late winter/early spring when we cut our roses back more severely than the rest of the year. This timeframe in the south is usually starts in February...or even late January depending on location. The further north you go in the US that time may even go later into March, April or even May.

The other period of pruning is actually done throughout the year as needed. During this time period most of the effort is deadheading, or removing old, spent blooms before the petals fall. A more important part of this type pruning starts even earlier, by cutting stems of beautiful roses to put in a vase and taking them into your home to display somewhere. You might give some to your neighbors or take to a local church or hospital to share.

The reasons for pruning are several:

**Height and Shape.** Roses can sometimes grow to sizes and shapes that become gangly or seemingly out of control. Pruning our roses helps to shape them into forms that are uniform and more pleasing to the eye. It also reduces heights to be more in tune to better viewing our roses. During the winter/early spring pruning we plan to reduce the overall height by 1/3 to 1/2. So, if the bush is 5-7' high, then we cut it down to about 3-4' high. A subset of this is to cut out sucker growth on grafted rose bushes. Suckers are new, above surface growth emanating from the rootstock. If left unpruned, the new rootstock growth can, in time, reduce the vigor of the hybrid rose. The sucker growth robs the hybrid growth of nutrients and may eventually strangle and kill the hybrid. That is not a good thing to let go. Removing sucker growth is necessary, not only in the winter/early spring pruning, but also throughout the year.

**Health.** Pruning out dead wood, damaged, weak and spindly stems, and crossing canes is vital to the health of the bush. It helps to create open spaces that reduce the potential for diseases and allow for better air flow through the bush, especially the center. Not pruning these canes results in a dense, tangled mess and an unhealthy bush. A healthy bush is much easier to take care of.

**Vigor.** The very act of pruning our bushes stimulates more active growth, providing new and healthy canes. New canes also provide for more healthy rose blooms. Who doesn't want more and better flowers?

As you can see, pruning roses is an important part of maintaining them in a healthy and vigorous condition. This makes for a more attractive garden, providing bountiful blooms for all to enjoy. So, don't be afraid of pruning roses...you won't kill them! Pruning is a very good thing.

Also, don't forget to share the love of roses with others! Give someone a bouquet of "pruned" roses!

## Hit The Road, Jack: The Brutal Art of Shovel Pruning

By Ruth Tiffany, reprinted from the Spring 2020 issue of the Northwest Rosarian, newsletter of the ARS Pacific Northwest District, Judy Redmond, Editor.

Edited for space

Let's face it: sometimes things just don't work out. You start off with the highest of hopes, the best laid plans, the noblest intentions, the most beautiful dreams. But somewhere along the way, something goes wrong. You begin to feel let down and disappointed, apathetic and strangely depressed. Deep in your heart, you know it's time to call it quits.

And yet, it's so hard to let go! You don't want to give up those fantasies of a perfect life together. You can't bear to face the gaping hole that saying good-bye will leave in your life. You're not convinced that anything better will ever come along, and anyway you dread the work involved in starting all over. Above all, you're wracked with guilt...Hold on. Let's stop right here for a minute and tighten our tether to reality.

First, we're talking about roses. A rosebush is not an actual spouse. At

best, it was a blind date. You weren't really committed. You never promised to live with the thing in sickness and health until whichever one of you keeled over first. No matter how infatuated you were when you planted it, no vows were taken, no binding contracts signed. When the time comes for the two of you to part ways, there will be no legal consequences. You will not have to pay alimony for the rest of your life, nor will you be indicted on charges of first degree murder.

Second, a rosebush does not have neurons and therefore does not feel pain. There will be no blood curdling primal scream when you rip it out by the roots...not from the rose anyway (wear gloves). I confess I have some issues around this myself, as I've always had a tendency to anthropomorphize everything in sight. When I was a child I named all the bugs and butterflies I caught and wept bitterly when they died. But, I am crazy. Don't let it happen to you.

Let's review some of the Frequently Asked Questions about shovel pruning.

Q: What does it mean to "shovel prune" a rose?

A: It means you look the rose in the eye and you say, "Hey nothing personal, it's just business." (Or maybe, "Honest, honey, it's not you,

it's me; I just need some time to think.") Then you pick up the shovel and pull the trigger, and that's that. Capisci? If you can't bring yourself to kill it, just give it to your mother-in-law.

Q: When is the best time to shovel prune a rose?

A: Some schools of thought think you should give a rose several years to prove itself: "First year sleeps, second year creeps, third year leaps." Other schools of thought think you should inflict capital punishment the minute a rose starts to seriously get on your nerves. Most people tend to be bit more trigger-happy when they're running out of room for new roses. It's really up to you.

Q: How can I tell whether I should shovel prune a particular rose?

A: Always remember there are no bad roses. There's only the wrong rose in the wrong climate or the wrong place for the wrong person in the wrong mood at the wrong time.

That said, let's look at nine examples of roses that are prime candidates for shovel pruning:

**The Jolly Green Giant** All the books swore this rose would be a compact three-foot shrub, yet it takes up more space than a 20-piecemariachi band. All the books swore this rose was an excellent re-bloomer, yet you haven't

seen a flower since last Easter. You find yourself swearing more than the books. **The Anesthesiologist** The rose that's so boring it puts you to sleep.

**The Mail Order Bride** You thought you clicked on Jessica Simpson, but somehow you ended up with Eleanor Roosevelt in your shopping cart. Gee, think maybe those photos were touched up just the teeniest bit?

**The Ebenezer Scrooge** This stingy old thing makes you work your fingers to the bone, yet payday never seems to roll around. Just say bah, humbug!

**The One Cane Wonder** It tries so hard, puts a few great roses on its single, solitary, lone cane but can't seem to grow an- other cane. Maybe it's just an old curmudgeon, a hermit, a feckless old fart with a bud union so gnarled and tight-fisted it won't ever let a companion join the fun.

In the final analysis, life is too short, yards are too small and there are too many wonderful roses out there to waste time on any rose that doesn't make your heart dance the Macarena with joy. So, don't be afraid to grab that shovel! No need to be sad, Brad; just dig up the dirt, Kurt; rip out the roots, Toots; and get yourself a rose that makes you happy instead.

*(I hope this fun article by Ruth Tiffany gave you a chuckle - I loved it! We've all been there, haven't we? Thanks Ruth!)*



**\*\*\*\*\*DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021. ALTHOUGH WE ARE STILL MEETING ONLINE FROM FEBRUARY ON, WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE GREAT PROGRAMS. SEE LAST PAGE FOR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM\*\*\*\*\***

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[redneckrosarian.com](http://redneckrosarian.com)  
[rosegardeningworld.com](http://rosegardeningworld.com)  
[thegardendiary.com](http://thegardendiary.com) (roses & companions)  
[theheritagerosesgroup.org](http://theheritagerosesgroup.org)  
[worldrose.org](http://worldrose.org)  
[www.gardendesign.com/roses/care.html](http://www.gardendesign.com/roses/care.html)  
 Rose Gardening Guru - [planetnatural.com](http://planetnatural.com)  
 Quiet Hut - [quiethut.com/rose-gardening/](http://quiethut.com/rose-gardening/)  
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Cool Roses  
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(Membership period runs from January to December)

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***Consulting Rosarians***

Our consulting Rosarians are appointed by the American Rose Society after spending years growing roses and being tested on their overall knowledge of roses and their care. They freely share this knowledge with anyone who loves and wants to grow roses.

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\*Master Rosarian



*La Marne La Marne La Marne*



Since we're not having in person meetings right now, our hospitality chairperson, **Jacquie Perry**, is taking a break from arranging goodies and beverages for our guests. She has provided many of these treats herself for several years, so let's give a big **THANK YOU** to Jacquie, for looking after us. Let's hope we can be together again soon.

Disclaimer: While the advice and information in this newsletter is believed to be true and accurate at the time of publication, neither the authors nor the editor accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions that may have been made. We make no warranty, expressed or implied with regard to the material contained in the publication.

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