

## Pruning Roses to “Hit” for Rose Shows

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If you've been bitten by the exhibiting bug but never seem to have roses for show time, don't feel alone. When Lynda and I first started to exhibit roses, we took whatever happened to be blooming at the time. I did no pruning whatsoever except for deadheading and cutting out dead canes. Then Phyllis McFadden took pity on me and gave me a copy of Sandy Lundberg's article on timing the pruning of your roses. It was then that I began to understand what “pruning for show” meant. You need to cut your rose stems so that they will “cycle” (or re-grow canes), and hopefully produce blooms in time for your rose show. While most hybrid teas take 45 days to develop from cut to bloom, others take a few more days and some take less. You need to look at this cycle, count back on the calendar from the date of your rose show, and then plan your pruning cuts.

Before beginning this practice, I had very few roses to take to the show; but when I started pruning at the required time, I began to have lots of blooms. With Lynda learning how to refrigerate the cuttings, our roses started to show up more on the trophy table. I'm still learning about pruning the hybrid teas for show as the weather seems to affect them more, but the miniatures are easy to prune for show. Why is that? Despite their small size, minis produce lots of stems and blooms, and usually have many more canes than a hybrid tea. I can cut four or more canes on a miniature bush in one weekend, whereas with a hybrid tea I usually only cut two or so.

I've listed below roses commonly grown in our area and the days before the show to prune them. Since the weather varies quite a bit in the spring, I usually prune a week ahead of the scheduled time, the regular time, and a week later. And as you may know, I work out of town during the week, so I do my pruning on the weekends. I spread my pruning cuts over the weekend so that the blooms won't all come in at once. Most people prune throughout the week, however. Everybody's garden has its own microclimate, so the days I specify are more for my garden than yours. If you like to keep records, check on your roses to see how long each stem takes to go from when you cut it until you have blooms. This will help you determine your own pruning schedule. And it may take a few years to get a system because of changes in weather patterns. The real fun comes when you combine your spring schedule with a fall one, but this is just another challenge for the hard-core exhibitor--we are true gluttons for punishment.

Good luck with your pruning and may you bring many blooms to the show!

Hybrid Tea Variety

Days

Miniatures

