

Figure previously published in The Rose Reporter January 2001 by Dr. Tommy Cairns, entitled "The Art and Technique of Rose Pruning"

Cuts should be made until white pith is revealed within the cane. For proper cutting of a cane, make your cut at a 45 degree angle approximately 1/4" above an outwardly facing bud eye. This distance allows the bud eye to develop properly and produce a cane that will grow away from the center of the bush (for maximum air flow). The cut on the bud eye side of the cane should also be higher than the cut to the inside of the cane. The cut is made at a 45° angle in order to reduce accumulation of water at the site that will promote disease growth.

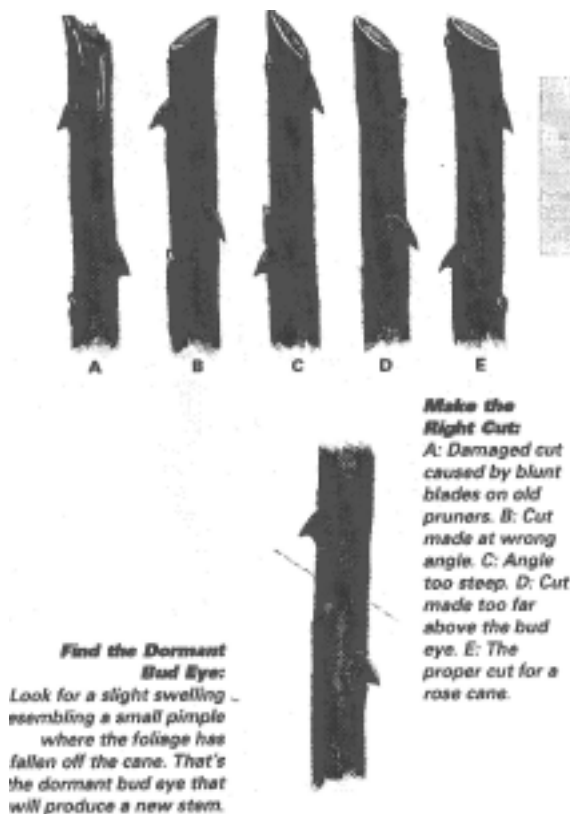


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After the pruning cut is made, cover the cut with some type of sealing material to prevent sawflies or carpenter bees from boring into the cane and laying eggs. The larva produced from these insect eggs are called cane borers, and they will eat the pith of the cane and cause severe damage to the cane. There are many types of sealing compounds that can be used to block the insects from laying eggs in the open pruning cut in the cane, including orange shellac, carpenter's glue, and tree pruning sealant (that black tarry stuff that gets all over everything!). Our favorite cane sealant is a product called **Rose Stick**, available at some local nurseries and through the **American Rose** magazine. This sealant is a green waxy material that can be rubbed over the end of the cane to seal it, but it is best applied with a Popsicle (or craft) stick or other small flat

object. The material soon dries to a hard seal that will not wash off in the rain and will last over a year or more.

Miniature roses can be pruned the same way as hybrid teas or floribundas, but many folks are happy to take a pair of hedge trimmers (manual or electric) and lop off the minis about 12" high or so (depends on the growth habits of the rose and winter damage). Then, they just let them grow. If you use this approach, make sure that you still remove the dead wood and twigggy growth for the reasons mentioned above. Gary prefers to trim the canes of the minis individually, but it does take a lot longer, and the "mass trimming" approach is easier on the back.

Pruning climbers and shrub roses is usually done to remove only dead and damaged wood in the spring. It is best to know your climber prior to pruning. Some climbers bloom only on second year growth. Others only bloom on lateral shoots from the main cane. Consequently, trimming the canes may reduce the amount of bloom the bush will generate next year. Canes older than four or five years old should be removed to stimulate the production of more basal breaks and help with vigor. Once-blooming climbers should be pruned after the initial bloom cycle is complete. Established canes can then be cut back to where they are about a pencil width in diameter. This will allow new growth to develop between June and October. Side stems that have bloomed can be cut to the lowest five-leaflet stem, which should be about 1 to 2 inches from the main cane. This pruning process will aid in promoting bloom along the entire length of cane.

Old garden roses should not be pruned as if they were hybrid teas. Remove dead or damaged canes and prune lightly. Last years canes should be pruned to promote bloom production, and a few of the older canes on an established bush should be pruned back to stimulate new cane formation. Severe pruning of an old garden rose can do more harm than good.

After the roses have been pruned and the ends of the cut canes sealed, the pruned canes should be discarded. The roses and ground should then be sprayed with a fungicide to prevent any fungal spores from getting established in the garden. You can use lime sulfur or copper but you must use a growing dose since many leaves are developing on the rosebushes.

When the pruning is finished, we usually add **Mills Magic Mix, Rosetone or Alfalfa Meal** to the soil around the base of the bushes to provide an organic fertilizer for the roses. As the soil warms above 55°F, the microorganisms in the soil will begin to break down the organics to help feed the roses.