

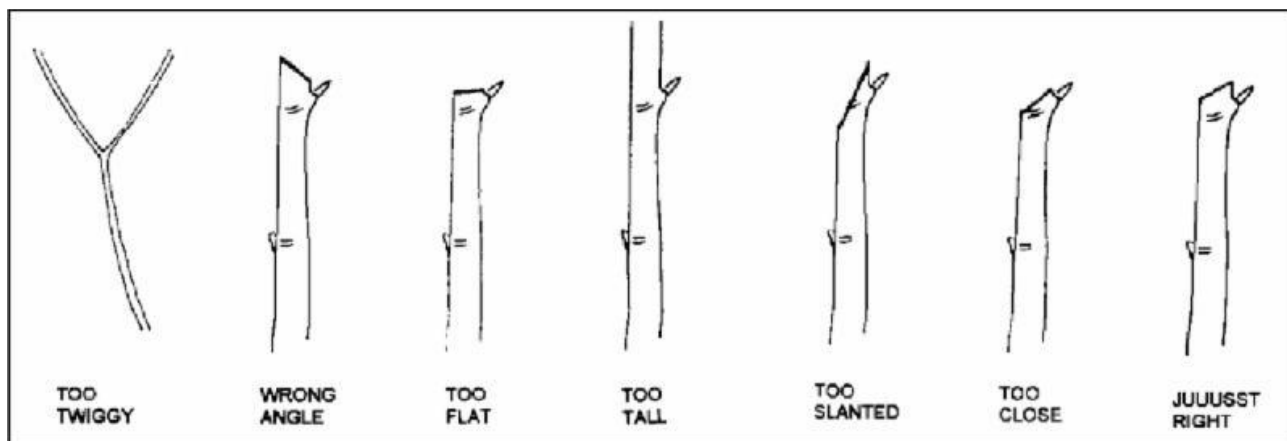
## TIME TO PRUNE (MANY) ROSES!

by Baxter Williams

[Houston Rose Society](#)

### TOOLS WE WILL NEED:

- Good pair of leather gloves
- Sharp bypass pruning shears; Felco No. 2 (men); No. 6 (women).
- Folding saw for larger canes.
- Protective clothing, to prevent being scratched.
- Tetanus booster up to date.

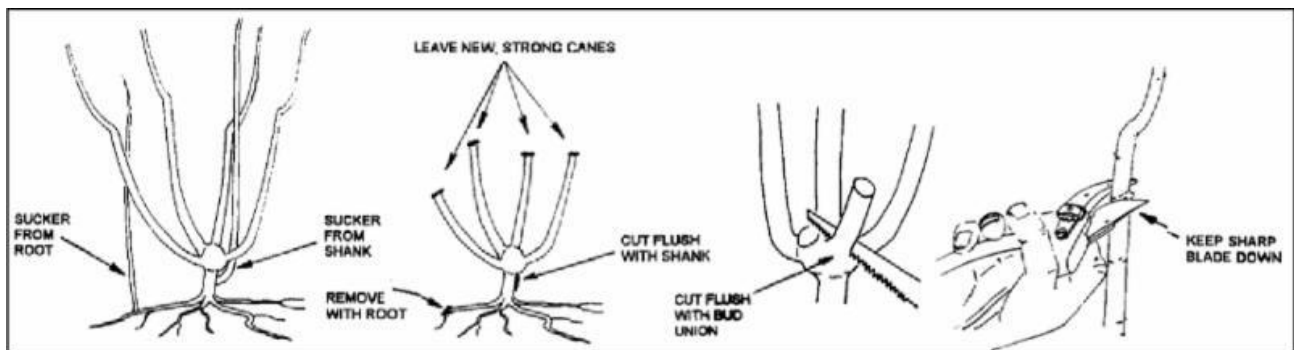


[Courtesy of Baxter Williams & Nature's Way Resources](#)

### HOW-TOs:

- Take a good look at the bush from the ground up. Cut off everything that is dead.
- Saw off little short pieces of canes flush (smooth) with the bud union or cane. Be careful not to damage brand new growths on the bud union.

- Look for 3 or more good strong canes at least pencil diameter. Thumb-sized even better. A cane whose only production was small, spindly (twiggy) canes and small blooms will be unproductive.
- Floribundas produce a cluster of blooms. Small canes with some branching are acceptable.
- Prune Hybrid Tea roses bushes to strong canes with white pith in the center.



- The picture perfect rose bush will resemble a tall vase (an open center, with canes on the outer perimeter) when pruned. BUT REMEMBER, rose bushes are like people, not all are picture-perfect.
- Most climbers bloom on last year's growth or older. Remove older canes (3 - 4 years old) if newer canes are available as replacements. Train canes to grow horizontally for maximum bloom production.
- Old Garden Roses are pruned lightly. Remove dead and twiggy canes.

### GENERAL "RULES OF THUMB":

1. Always hold shears so the sharp cutting blade is nearest the roots (the "fat" blade contacts the part that is cut away).
2. Make each cut about 1/8-inch above an outward-facing eye.



3. Cut down to clean white pith in the center of the cane. Discolored pith is a sign of freeze or other damage.
4. Seal canes with white Elmer's glue to protect them from insects (cane borers), etc..
5. Remove as many "dog-legs" as possible. There is a tendency to cut a stem, leaving two or three eyes, and then do the same thing the next time we cut a stem, thereby making a "dog-leg" effect. Should you choose to leave a secondary stem, at least two eyes must be left for future production (one eye will not do the job).
6. While there is NO set height to prune a bush, a good rule of thumb is to remove at least the top 1/3 to 1/2 from the bush, leaving the bush at about 30-inches.
7. When pruning is completed, remove all remaining old foliage from the bush.