



Can I save my bushes, or are they going to die?

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No, they shouldn't die, but you need to re-prune them. Here are the steps:

1. Pinch, or cut off little wilted growths. They won't rejuvenate.
2. Cut damaged stems, down to healthy tissue. Leave no brown or discolored center in the cane. Keep cutting until white or green color is seen. For the next cut, be judicious. The cut results in most-nearly vertical stem, with little reason to curve; cutting to "an outward pointing eye" always results in a curved stem. Grooming a bush into "an open bowl-shaped center" allows sunlight to reach foliage in the bush's middle.
3. The final location of the cut should be 1/8-inch above a "clean" eye, i.e., one having no foliar growth around it, only a smooth rounded bump.
4. When it is necessary to remove a cane at the bud union, seal the cut to prevent bacteria from causing rotting at the site. Seal the cut using white (Elmer's) wood-working glue, not tree pruning paint.
5. A few days after re-pruning you will see new growth. It should be of the same diameter as the cane that has been cut.
6. Sometimes three new growths appear at a cut node. The middle stem will be weaker than the two outside ones. If you remove the two outside ones, the middle one will be a strong one. Your choice: a strong single cane (middle), or two slightly smaller ones.
7. Sometimes very short new growths occur, with many small foliages, e.g., five leaflets on a 1-inch stem. This "blind shoot" will not make a flower. The entire growth can be pinched/cut off, allowing stronger growths elsewhere. If allowed to



remain, such a weak growth will be an ideal spot for aphids and blackspot to occur.

8. Collect your clippings, and compost them. They were not diseased, and are made from actual rose material, including the nutrients that you had put into the soil for the bushes to eat.
9. When you first pruned your bushes you probably removed about 1/2-1/3 of their height --- a matter of personal preference and historical practice --- and now you must go farther.

I once asked the late well-known rose expert, Guy Blake Hedrick, Jr., why his bushes were planted so low, their bud unions were essentially in hole at ground level. He said he mounded soil up over the bud unions because, there in NE Oklahoma, the bitter winters to keep them from freeze damage.

The canes sticking up out of the soil would die and turn black, but the parts under the soil would remain green and viable for spring growth. As a result every year his plants essentially had all new basal breaks. And folks, you could almost never beat his roses on the show tables!

So don't worry about pruning your bushes way down, if necessary. I have already cut about 6-feet off my better Hybrid Teas, and if I need to cut another 2-3 feet off, I'll do it.