



Baxter Williams is an American Rose Society Master Rosarian with over 50 years experience growing roses in Houston. His own garden has 500 bushes of all types.

IT'S ALMOST VALENTINE'S DAY -- TIME TO PRUNE MOST ROSES!

by Baxter Williams

[Houston Rose Society](#)

- Your roses are at their most dormant state, so they will not even notice what you are doing to them. Prune bushes to prevent disease, and to produce more flowers.
- Climbers should be cut AFTER THEY HAVE BLOOMED. Trim about 1/3 of their stem back, and train them horizontally to get many more blooms.
- For all large types --- Hybrid Teas, Grandifloras, Floribundas, Climbers --- prune to a pencil-sized or larger cane, an eighth of an inch above an "eye" --- new growth will always be at the same diameter as the cut. Note: It matters not if the cut is at 45 degrees.
- Don't worry about sealing the cut, unless the cut is at the Bud Union (that big knot from which all of the lower canes grow), in which case trim the cut cane off smooth with the bud union surface before sealing --- and then use Elmer's glue.

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- Bushes should end up about knee-to-thigh height.
- In all cases, cut away dead stems and twiggy stems. Miniscule stems cannot adequately support big, beautiful blooms.



L to r, bypass shears top and anvil below, rose bush bud union, rose "bud eye" with sprouting stem and and, at right, an outward-facing bud.

- Use sharp BYPASS SHEARS. Anvil-type shears crush the stems.
- Hold the shears such that the thicker blade is against the piece that goes away (the thicker blade will crush the stem, allowing bacteria to enter and compromise the cane, but the sharp blade will cut right through).
- Remove last year's leaves. They have done their job, and are weaker (and therefore more likely to become infected with diseases such as blackspot)
- Roses from nurseries also need to be pruned. All of their canes were cut to the same length, and none of the twiggy stems were removed as they were being potted at the nursery, so give them better cuts per above instructions.