

Pruning Old Garden Roses

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Part of the summer care for your roses should include pruning your once-blooming Old Garden Roses (OGRs) and Ramblers. All once-blooming plants should be pruned right after they finish blooming, unless you want a display of rose hips in the fall. There are several reasons for summer pruning once-bloomers. The first is the plant is ready for pruning. Some Damasks, if pruned in the winter, will have complete



cane dieback. This will not occur right after blooming. Next, several once-bloomers will only bloom off of one or two year old wood. The plant has a chance to grow new wood, which will be ready to bloom next year. If you winter prune, you may not get any blooms next year. If there is any new growth late in the year, it may not survive cold or freezing weather. Summer is the time to hard prune your larger roses to keep them manageable.

Winter Pruning: All of your once-blooming Old Garden Roses (OGRs) and ramblers should have been pruned during the summer. For repeat blooming OGRs, winter is the time to prune. You need to be aware of your rose's sensitivity to pruning. For example, Marchesa Boccella (1842 Hybrid Perpetual) can be hard pruned, while others, like Chinas and Teas, tolerate only minimal pruning. A safe bet is to prune each rose cane back 1/3 of its length. In all cases, for once or repeat bloomers, remove all dead and diseased wood completely. I winter prune only to

keep my plants in shape. Also, try to avoid pruning any OGRs in the first two years. Let them get established first.

Pruning OGRs is rather easy: Don't, if you can help it. The once-blooming OGRs, such as Gallicas and Albas, should be pruned right after blooming and not during the winter. The reason is that most of these roses (also Ramblers), will only bloom off of year-old wood. Avoid heavy pruning other than removing dead or diseased growth. Repeat blooming OGRs can be pruned during winter when dormant. Outside of removing dead and diseased growth, pruning a cane back 1/3 is a good rule of thumb. New OGRs should not be pruned in the first two years.