

Pruning Roses

Simple pruning

Most roses can be pruned quite easily using the method given for shrub roses on page 15: allow the plant to grow and fill out during its first and second years. At the end of the third season, shear off the top third of the plant, trimming all branches to achieve a uniform shape. To encourage new blooms, trim away old flowers as they fade throughout the blooming season.

Pruning tools

Use any pruning shears designed for roses. A 2" blade works best, or use long-handled lopping shears for larger, more mature canes.

When to prune

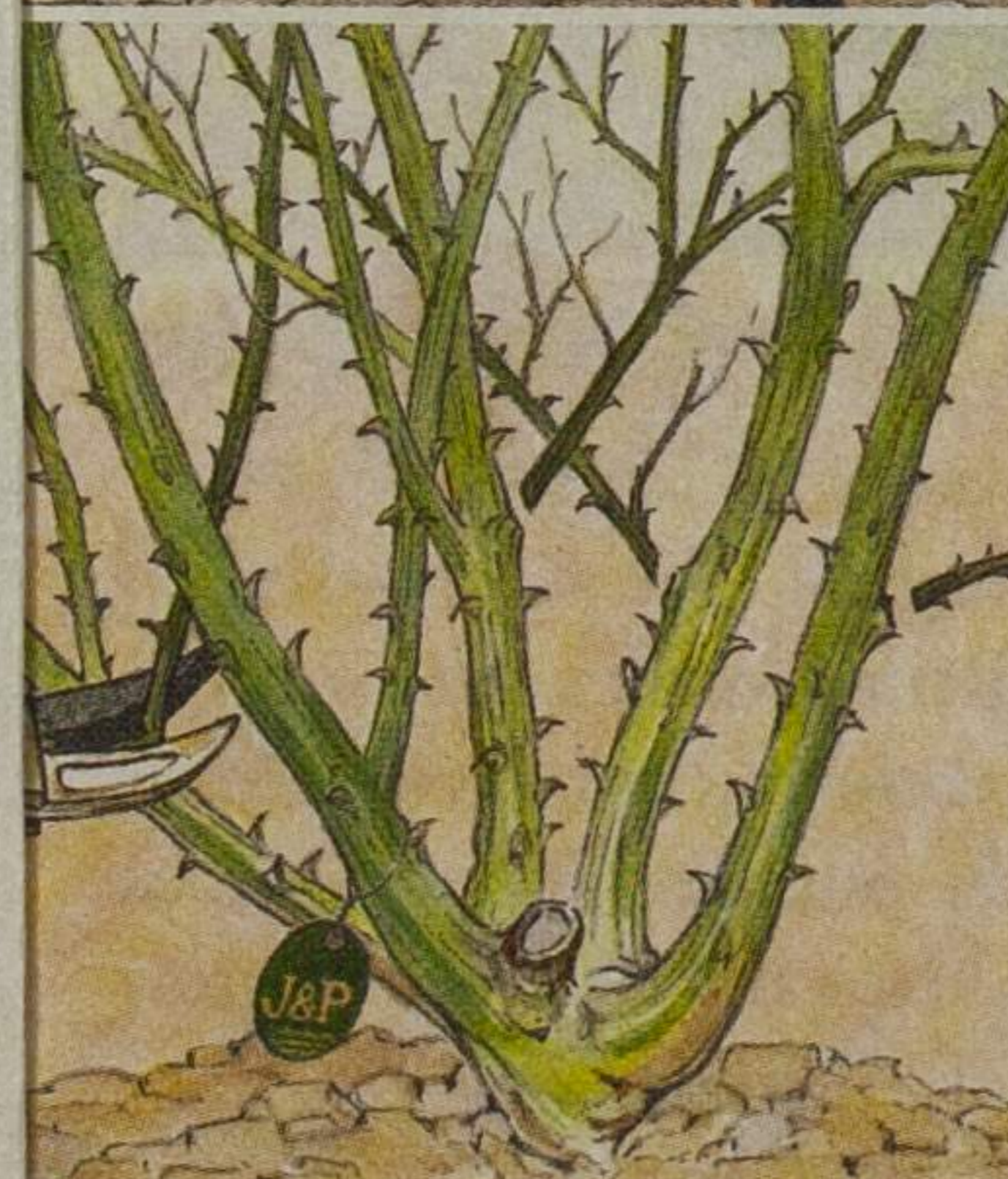
The best time to prune is late winter, before new growth starts in the spring, sometime after the last hard frost. Do not prune once new growth is 2"-3" long. Fall pruning is necessary only when plants are extremely tall, to prevent wind damage during winter.

What to prune

Weak, diseased or winter-damaged wood, which looks brown and dry on the outside, should be removed 1-2 inches below the damage. Also remove any branch crossing or rubbing another – always leave the newest, healthiest cane.

Pruning for show-quality blooms

If you choose to grow your rose plants to produce fewer but larger, show-quality blooms, prune according to the following illustrated steps. Always trim away old flowers as they fade to encourage new and larger blooms.



1 Examine the rose for sucker growth (any shoot that grows below the bud union – occurs on grafted roses only). If suckers are present, dig down and pull them out from the root. Suckers rob the plant of its strength.

2 Remove dead wood (distinguishable by its darker color) and broken or diseased canes. Prune 1/4" above an out-facing bud, 2"-3" below the damage.

3 Prune away weak or spindly canes, leaving the stronger ones to grow. If canes are crossed or badly congested, remove the smaller, weaker canes. This will strengthen remaining canes and preserve the health of the plant.

4 Prune all remaining canes to maintain a rounded form and encourage growth. Cut 1/4" above the nearest out-facing bud at the height you desire. For larger blooms, leave 3-5 canes and prune back to 12"-18" high. For more blooms and a larger shrub, leave 5-12 canes and prune to 1/2 - 2/3 of present height.