

Pruning Tips

For roses, brambles, grapes

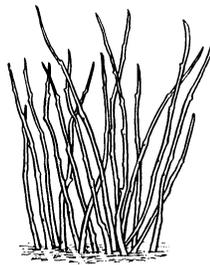
Roses

We prune roses to promote their health, vigor, and to give them direction. Pruning gives the plants a shape, removes unproductive wood, removes winter-damaged wood, and provides good air circulation. The best time to prune is in the early spring before new growth starts, sometime after the last killing frost. Prune out weak or winter-damaged wood. Cut off 1-2" below the damage. Remove any crossing branches. Always leave the newest, healthiest canes. Also, remove any suckers growing below the bud union. When pruning, cut $\frac{1}{4}$ " above dormant bud eyes that face to the outside of the bush. The new growth will come from those eyes. Climbing roses usually bloom best on 2 year old wood, so prune very little. Take out spindly new wood, older wood that is not blooming well, and damaged canes only.

Raspberries

Often only the shoots of suckers that start close to the original plant are allowed to grow, thus the canes are kept grouped together in the so-called hill. However, the home gardener may wish to let the hills grow together, thereby conserving space in the garden. Unwanted suckers arising too far from the mother plant may be grubbed out as they appear.

One-crop raspberries fruit on two-year-old wood. After harvest, the two year old fruiting wood begins to die and can be removed. The one year old canes that are left can then be thinned the following fall or spring to remove the weaker canes, and those selected to remain for the next summer's crop can be cut back to 4 to 6 feet. Usually at least seven to ten canes are left per hill.



Before Thinning



After Thinning

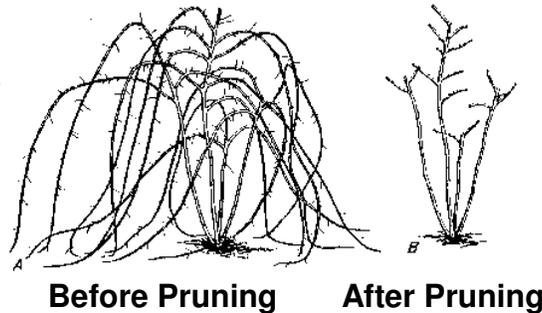
Two-crop or everbearing raspberries are handled much the same except that they fruit in the fall on one-year-old canes. The fruit will appear on the top foot or so of the cane, and it is a common practice to remove the portion of the cane that fruited after harvest, leaving the rest of the cane to produce next summer's crop. The everbearing raspberry thus produces a summer crop on two-year-old wood and a fall crop on one-year-old wood. As with the one-crop raspberries, the two year old canes die and are removed after the harvest or early the following spring.

Many people cut **all** canes to the ground each fall on their everbearing raspberries. This sacrifices the spring crop but saves a substantial amount of labor in thinning and pruning. The risk is that production can be severely reduced in the event of an early fall frost.

Red raspberries can be supported either with tall stakes or, ideally, with a two wire trellis. The wires of the trellis are usually placed about one foot below the height at which the canes have been pruned. The wires are placed on each side of the post with large staples or nails. Sometimes crosspieces are nailed to the posts so that the two wires are 12 to 15 inches apart. A second set of wires may sometimes be placed a few feet below the top wires. The canes can be tied to the top set of wires. Certain varieties may need no support at all. The everbearing raspberries fall into this category.

Blackcaps

When one-year-old canes arising in the spring reach a height of 18-24 inches, they should be pinched back 3 or 4 inches. This practice forces out strong fruiting laterals for next year's berry crop. No more attention is paid to the canes after pinching until time for pruning in late winter. During winter, the old two-year-old wood that fruited the previous summer is removed, and the laterals or branches that arose after summer pinching of the one-year-old canes may be shortened to about 12 inches. Of course, any weak canes may also be removed at this time. The properly pruned plant has a globe shaped, hedge-like appearance with the fruit occurring on the outside surface of the bush. Staking may be beneficial for the first crop of a new planting, but is not needed after that.

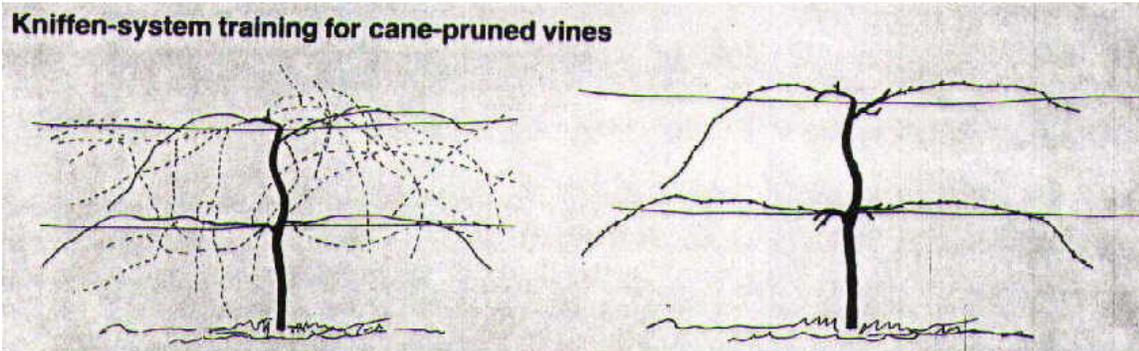


Grapes

American Grapes are best trained using the four arm **Kniffen - system**. This is done by stretching two stout wires between two posts that have been spaced ten feet apart. The top wire is tightly strung about five feet off the ground, and the second about two feet. The grape vine is planted between the two posts. Over time a strong central trunk is trained with only four arms, or branches, growing out of it.

After planting, prune the vine back so that only two buds are left above ground. This may seem a little drastic, but it is necessary to develop a strong central trunk and a healthy grape plant. When new canes have grown out from the buds and are about two feet long, choose the strongest one and fasten it loosely to the end of a string. Tie this to the top wire. This will lead the cane straight up so that it will become the trunk and lateral canes will grow from it to form the four arms.

Kniffen-system training for cane-pruned vines



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