

Peter Beales®

World Leaders in Classic Roses

# The Basics of Maintaining Climbing & Rambling Roses



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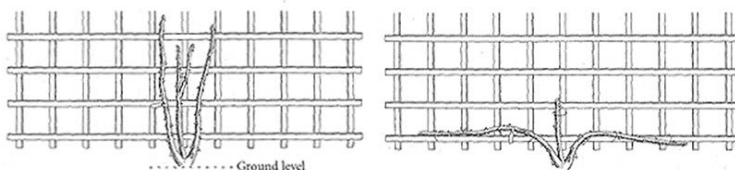
## Training climbing and rambling roses

Roses do not cling to the wall themselves like some plants do. Therefore they will require tying in. On a wall it is a good idea to put up trellis or wires for this purpose. As the rose grows it should be encouraged to grow horizontally outward and upward. The lower stems straight out where possible and the taller ones, up and then outward. In this way new growth will be encouraged, as will more flowers.

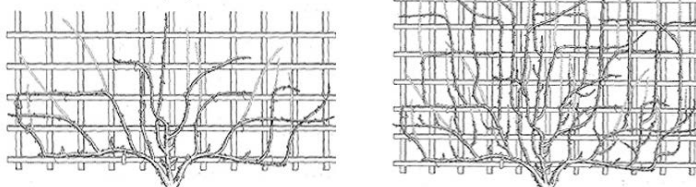
On a pillar it is best, where possible to train the branches around it for the same reason as above.

Ramblers for trees will need to be tied to the trunk to begin with until the branches meet those of the tree, thereafter, the tree will act as a natural support.

First year



Second and Third year



To prevent all the flowers appearing at the top of a trellis, arch and curve the stems as much as possible, rather than keeping them straight. This will encourage side lateral growth which will encourage flowering lower down the plant. Attach stems to the trellis using loosely tied green string.

## General Pruning Rules

There are some golden rules of pruning level that apply to all roses.

- Always use good quality, sharp secateurs.
- Ensure that all cuts are made above a node, on an angle, away from the bud.
- Cuts should be clean.
- Remove dead, damaged and diseased wood.
- Remove wood, which has rubbed against other branches, and become damaged.
- Try to keep the centre of the plant open.

## General Pruning Guide for Once Flowering Climbing and Rambling Roses

- Ramblers will often produce long, flexible branches from ground level. THESE ARE NOT SUCKERS and will produce next years flowers.
- Prune the older wood and leave as many young shoots as possible.
- Pruning should be done in summer immediately after flowering.
- Some Ramblers require only occasional pruning and are often better left to their own devices.

## Pruning Once Flowering Rambling Roses

If you study these ramblers you will note that at, and after, flowering time they will be sending out long fishing rod like lengths of growth. These are the flower bearing stems for the following season and should be left untouched. As long as you recognise these, pruning can be done at any time after flowering, with any necessary removal from the old wood that has flowered. Remember though that many of these roses will set hips and if this is the case pruning should be saved for spring.

Simply dispense with any of the old wood, or cut it back and tie in the new rods. If the plant is trailing over a fence for example, train the rods out like a fan as horizontally as possible but without snapping them. This will promote more flowers. Ramblers going into trees etc may be difficult to get to, in which case why worry?

## Pruning Climbing Roses

Groups such as the Noisettes, climbing Hybrid Teas and Floribundas, climbing Teas and climbing Hybrid Perpetuals produce flowers on growth that is made in the same season, therefore a spring tidy up suits them just fine. To begin with remove the unwanted wood, that which is growing in a cumbersome manner, is dead or diseased or damaged. Once you have done this I would suggest you step back and see what you have left. The two main objectives now are shape and the promotion of flower and low growth.

To encourage low growth it is best to adopt a rotational system. This will encourage flowers to be produced from low down right up to the top of the plant. To achieve this simply stagger your pruning by taking approximately 30 percent of the branches down to around two thirds of the plant's height, then prune a further 30 percent of the branches down to around a third of the plants height and finally just tidy up what remains.

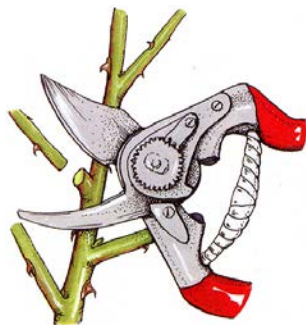
Once this is done, train out as many of the branches as possible horizontally thus promoting more flower. This climbing rose has been well pruned but could do with a larger trellis to allow the laterals to be trained horizontally.

## Pruning newly planted bare root roses

These should always be hard pruned at the time of planting, before they are placed in the hole is the logical time. Even the most rampant of ramblers will benefit from this treatment as it encourages basal growth, from which the plant will make its shape. Climbers, ramblers and shrub roses should be reduced to about six inches, bush roses to about four inches.

## Dead heading

Unless a rose produces hips it will require dead-heading for a couple of reasons. Firstly a dead flower head is unsightly but, more importantly, the removal of the spent flowers on a repeat flowering plant will speed up the formation of the next flowers. You will notice that the stem supporting the flower will always die back when it's task is accomplished, by removing it the process is simply speeded up. A spent flower that was a solitary bloom should be cut away just above the next or lower leaf joint, from which point the next bloom will grow. The same applies to clusters of flowers. Although removing the flower individually is fine whilst waiting for others to finish but the whole cluster should be removed down to the next or lower leaf joint. Of course this is not such an easy task on a large climber, where one or two spent flowers may have to remain, until they eventually fall.



## Feeding Roses

Roses are very hungry plants and should therefore be fed regularly throughout their lives to ensure maximum blooms and growth, from first year plants through to 50 year old ramblers.

We recommend a good feed of a nitrogen high feed like “Top Rose” after the late-winter prune in February, then feeding every two weeks throughout the flowering period with a high potash feed like “Tomorite” tomato feed at half the recommended strength.



This photo shows the benefits of using a liquid feed regularly throughout the summer months. Both of these roses were pruned to the same height, then one was giving a regular liquid feed, whereas the other was given just water. The results are clear with one producing stronger, healthier new growth and many clusters of buds.

# Pests and diseases that affect roses

As with all plants, roses can become infested with pests or damaged by disease. This should not however be a reason for not including them in the garden, as Peter used to say 'what are a few black spots among friends?'

Good husbandry is really a matter of common sense, a little bit of logical thinking in relation to the choice of variety and its situation, its care coupled with preventative measures will go a long way in maintaining a healthy rose.



Aphids

## Pests



Red spider mite damage

Pests can include a range of creatures that often feed off of the plant and can, if left untreated, cause serious damage to your roses.

These can include Aphids, Caterpillars, Leaf Rolling Sawfly, Rose Slug Sawfly, Red Spider Mite and Thrips.

Whilst traditional methods of control such as spraying with insecticides are often effective in controlling an outbreak of these pests, natural alternative forms of pest control are also available. These are much kinder to the environment and can include introducing natural predators and parasites to your

gardens. Many of these beneficial predators can also be encouraged into your garden naturally by introducing bug boxes and by planting certain companion plants, such as marigolds.

Rabbits and Deer can also prove to be a serious problem for roses, nibbling on the fresh new growth in spring and

devastating the plant by stripping its bark in the winter.

The only real solution is to ensure that Rabbits and Deer are unable to enter your garden by erecting a fence.

Alternatively, whilst not looking very attractive, putting individual wire fencing around each rose will do the job, if it is not possible to completely contain your garden with a perimeter fence.



Leaf Rolling Sawfly Damage



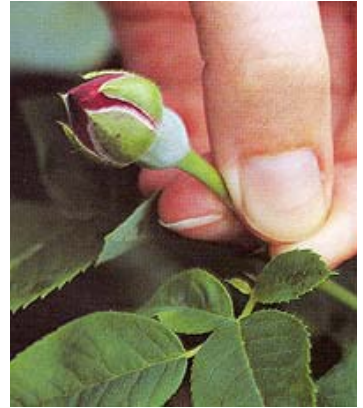
Rose Slug Sawfly Damage

# Diseases

## Mildew

There are two forms of mildew 'downy' and 'powdery'. Downy mildew is more likely to occur on roses grown under glass and is far less common than powdery mildew. Extreme differences between day and night time temperatures can be contributory, as can poor ventilation. Unlike powdery mildew, downy mildew is more brown or blue in shade and will attack the mature leaves first.

Powdery mildew is the most prevalent in the garden and is more likely to occur in situations that are dry and airless. A grey to white coloured powder will appear initially on young leaves and succulent shoots, causing them to become distorted and therefore inhibiting the growing process. If it is not checked, it will then spread on to older leaves and stems and, eventually, on to flower buds where it will prevent them from opening, thus causing them to drop off. Because it is not often seen until after the first flush of flowers when the summer heat is more intense, a degree of prevention can be achieved from a regular spraying regime earlier on. Mildew is difficult to control organically, the only advice to offer is that a well-tended rose will be less susceptible than a neglected one. Once in place mildew is difficult to cure, although fungicides will prevent it from spreading. It is best to ensure that the affected leaves are removed and destroyed, as well as any infected wood.



## Black Spot

Fallen leaves should be collected and burnt where possible, as the spores will over-winter in shallow soil where they will remain ready to begin their destruction the following year.



In the worst scenario the spores will infect branches and unless tackled this is when the whole plant is at risk. Cut away what you can and apply a winter wash with a mild steriliser, there are now several available that will successfully deal with fungal diseases such as black spot. A regular wash with the hose is also recommended as this will wash the spores away from the plant on which it is harbouring. Some say that black spot can be deterred by spraying the plant with a solution of skimmed milk, but we have never tried doing so.



## Rust

Rust enjoys warm and damp conditions and can totally destroy a rose if infestation is bad enough. Symptoms first appear in early summer in the form of small bright orange pustules on the undersides of leaves. They often go unnoticed until the disease spreads when they become larger, changing colour to brown and then to black. In a bad attack the spores will kill the leaves and eventually spread to the stems, which will start to die back. Control is almost impossible at this stage when the only real option is to dig up the plant and burn it. If it is caught early enough however, pick off and burn the infected leaves and keep an eye out for re-infection.

As in the case of black spot, rust spores will lie dormant on dead leaves or in the soil during the winter, so gather up any fallen leaves and wash the plant and surrounding soil with a fungicide whilst it is dormant. The following season ensure that a spraying regime is started early and repeated regularly.



## Stem Canker

Canker is seldom seen on younger well-tended roses, occurring most frequently on mature plants with a high percentage of old wood. It manifests itself in the form of gnarled, swollen lesions, often with surrounding dead and furling bark. Canker will usually appear where there has been exposed tissue at sites of previous damage, such as at the union where the plant was originally budded. If the stem on which it appears is expendable simply remove it. Frequently however, the canker will appear in awkward places that are impossible to prune away. If the plant is important to the garden the only solution is to carefully cut away the damaged tissue. Use a sharp knife for this and keep on removing layers until only clean pith is left. Cover the scar with grafting wax to prevent other infections entering. If the rose is not important the easiest solution is to dig it up and burn it.

## Viruses

Viruses are not contagious between roses in the garden and if present will have been there since the plant was propagated. Rose mosaic is the worst of the viruses manifesting itself as wavy yellow lines or white blotches on leaves, and although there are others, they are of less significance. Viruses are not life threatening and at worst will cause somewhat stunted growth and blooms.



## Other rose ailments

Pests and diseases are not the only ailments to affect roses but by and large the majority of others are cosmetic and will do no real harm.

### Proliferation

This is one of the weirdest phenomena of the rose. In early summer a bloom will appear to be opening quite normally, then it will be noticed that another bud is appearing from the centre of the unfurling flower. This is proliferation and no one knows exactly why it happens. Some experts believe it to be viral, and it does tend to occur repeatedly in the same varieties although not consistently on every plant in that variety, but the general consensus is that it is genetic, with parts of the reproductive area over producing.



### Balling Flowers (sticking petals)



In wet summer weather the outer petals on a freshly opening flower often become fused together, the flower is then referred to as being 'balled'. This is most often found on the many petalled varieties with naturally tight buds, particularly some of the Bourbons and the Hybrid Teas. If full sun follows prolonged rain the petals that are congealed together then dry out to become a crisp shell which will prevent the flower opening. If this happens the bloom will rot within its cocoon and fall away or remain on the plant in a revolting brown state.

Sometimes with a bit of care, the outer petals can be gently teased away to allow the flower to open naturally.

### Spray Damage

If regular spraying is a common practice in the garden, make sure that two sprayers are kept, with one used specifically for weed killers. If inadvertently used without thorough cleaning, traces of weed killer from the knapsack or pump up sprayer can be positively poisonous to roses. Likewise should a neighbour or farmer spray herbicide when it is windy it is possible for the spray to drift with the same outcome. Similarly, roses that are climbing up fences and structures that have been recently painted/creosoted seem to object to close proximity to the chemicals.





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