

The Green Scene

Meetings and Announcements

Master Gardener Program--It's On the Way!

From Erinne Rabanal, our Master Gardener Coordinator:

Thank you to all for your interest in the UC Master Gardener Program. The cohort for spring, 2026, classes has been selected. We expect to begin recruitment for the January 2027 cohort in late spring or early summer of 2026. Also, Erinne is beginning a Master Gardener newsletter. If you want to support the program or join the newsletter, please feel free to contact her at erabanal@ucanr.edu

Master Gardener Classes--An Opportunity—Second Track

I have heard from several individuals who would like to take the Master Gardener (MG) classes, but don't have time for the volunteer component. As you may know, for many years I offered horticulture classes at several levels. We are going to offer an opportunity to sit in on the classes, but without the volunteer component. If you want to take this avenue, you could come to the lectures, or the lectures of interest, and take notes. However, you would not be able to participate in future MG social events or official MG activities, since you would not be a certified Master Gardener. The cost for the class series is \$90. If you're interested, please send me a note at jfkarlik@ucanr.edu.

The Home Orchard, second edition

After some little time, the second edition of the UC publication *The Home Orchard* is now available.

Annual Winter Fruit Tree Pruning Demonstration

We plan to hold our annual winter pruning demonstration for deciduous fruit trees and grapes during the first week of February, 2026. We have not made a decision on the date, but I will announce when available.

Winter Pruning of Outdoor Roses—It's Time

In December to early January on the valley floor of Kern County, annual winter pruning will be needed for hybrid teas and grandifloras. The time of pruning can be

delayed in mountain areas until the coldest weather has passed but before bud swell occurs.

Rose pruning in home gardens and landscapes can be a simple matter requiring little time. As for other woody plants, pruning is used for roses to invigorate the plant and direct its growth, but the amount of pruning depends on rose type and purpose in the landscape.

Broadly speaking, most roses grown outdoors can be divided into two groups. Roses grown for cut flowers include hybrid teas and grandifloras, for example, the classic varieties 'Peace,' 'Oklahoma,' 'Mister Lincoln,' and 'Chrysler Imperial.' The shrub- or landscape-type roses are grown as floriferous shrubs, for example, the varieties 'Pink Simplicity,' 'Knock Out,' and 'Flutterbye.'

For hybrid tea and similar roses, we remove dead, diseased and damaged wood as well as older canes showing poor vigor. Canes severely affected by scale insects can also be removed. The rose plant can be thinned, removing central canes to favor 3-5 canes growing toward the outside. Although a standard recommendation is to make cuts at a 45° angle just above an outward-facing bud, it is not necessary for plant health to be so precise, since roses have many dormant buds and can form new buds readily. For hybrid teas and grandifloras, about 10-15 minutes per plant should be enough time for pruning. In other words, don't worry too much about exactly how and where cuts are made. An exception to that statement would be pruning for show roses and, of course, we are not talking about greenhouse flower production where pruning is specific per variety.

The function of the rose plant in the landscape should influence the amount of pruning. Roses used for screens or accent plantings can be lightly pruned so as to retain their size, removing perhaps 1/3 of the height. Pruning a rose to shorter canes does result in longer flower stems, if that is important to you.

Shrub- or landscape-type roses should be treated as floriferous shrubs, and should not be pruned back to a few short canes as hybrid teas can be. Dead wood should be removed. Older canes can be removed, and (gasp) a hedge trimmer can be used for speed to shorten long canes and make the plant smaller in size. Use of a hedge trimmer, however, does not imply that plants should be formed into little globes or boxes, diminishing their aesthetic value and defeating their purpose in the landscape. Shrub / landscape roses are typically (and should be) only lightly pruned, since they function as colorful shrubs, so upright varieties can be left to 5-8 feet.

A peer-reviewed study conducted by Dr. Jim Downer of the University of California Cooperative Extension showed that it is variety rather than pruning that has the most influence on flower number and growth of landscape-type outdoor roses (Downer et al., 2015, *Acta Horticulturae* 1064: 253-258). There were few differences in plant quality between intermediate pruning treatments (36 or 18 inches height). Severe pruning (6 inches) resulted in significantly fewer flowers in most varieties during the four-year study period. Plants pruned lightly had the greatest number of flowers. Variety selection had the most influence on plant characteristics over four years.

The University of California has three free publications that describe the care of outdoor roses including insect and disease management. These can be read and downloaded from the UCIPM website, <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/>.

John Karlik
Environmental Horticulture/Environmental Science

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