

Meetings and Announcements

Annual Winter Pruning Demonstration

We plan to hold our annual winter pruning demonstration on January 12, beginning 11 am, at the Farm & Home office, 1031 S. Mt. Vernon, rain or shine. This is an outdoor event, and so is accompanied by safety in terms of Covid. Come join us and have a break from the office or house confinement.

Weekly Horticulture Zoom Talks Resume January 13

Horticulture Zoom talks resume in 2022. I offered 52 of these in 2020-2021. Although most were focused on notable gardens of Europe and Asia, I also did a series of talks on climate change and other topics about the environment. Let us plan for January 13, Thursday, 4:30 pm, same day of the week and time as before. Your input on content is welcome.

Horticulture Classes—Not for now

The rise of Omicron has caused me to pause with regard to offering in-person classes. I will not schedule a class until we see how things go in early spring.

39th Annual Landscape Management Seminar, February 17, 2022

The all-day 39th Annual Landscape Management Seminar is scheduled for February 17, 2022, at Hodels. Abate-a-Weed is cooperating as a sponsor for this meeting and will be handling registration. We will request eight hours of PCA credit for this meeting, including two hours of laws.

XII Horticulture Study Tour

We plan to offer our 12th Horticulture Study Tour in mid-May, 2022. The itinerary is to be essentially the same as we anticipated previously, the postponement due to Covid. The time frame is to be about two weeks, beginning in England at the flagship Royal Horticulture Society garden at Wisley, a stop at Salisbury and Stonehenge, and then to Wales. After seeing gardens in Wales, we move to Edinburgh for a day, and then go north in Scotland, circling west to Inverewe and the Isle of Skye, finishing back in Edinburgh. The date framework is being confirmed, and I will announce when available.

Winter Pruning of Outdoor Roses

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 a bit 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 recent 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, recently revised and updated, 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/>.

Winter Irrigation for Home Landscapes, Gardens, and Orchards

In the southern San Joaquin Valley, the need for water in a landscape varies from summer to winter by about a factor of 10. The December-January period sees the lowest demand from plants of about 0.01 to 0.02 inches per day; irrigation clocks can be adjusted so the system runs perhaps once per week. In many years, it has been possible to shut off irrigation during winter, since plant needs are taken care of by rain. We've had good rain recently, and so in many landscapes the irrigation may be shut down for awhile. The duration without irrigation can depend on whether or not rains continue into January and early spring. Irrigation may be needed for overseeded grass, although its demand for water will be low at this time of year.

John Karlik

Environmental Horticulture/Environmental Science

Disclaimer: Discussion of research findings necessitates using trade names. This does not constitute product endorsement, nor does it suggest products not listed would not be suitable for use. Some research results included involve use of chemicals which are currently registered for use, or may involve use which would be considered out of label. These results are reported but are not a recommendation from the University of California for use. Consult the label and use it as the basis of all recommendations.

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