



Regular pruning maximizes the beauty and romance of climbing roses. The process is simple once you know the basics. Prune at the same time you prune other roses. Don't prune a newly planted climber for the first 2-3 years, other than to remove spent flowers and damaged or diseased growth. This gives it a chance to establish some primary canes. Don't be surprised if long canes don't grow right away. Many climbing roses take 1-2 years to settle in.

On established roses, begin by finding and marking the primary and secondary canes that make up your basic framework. If this is the first year you're pruning a young rose, select 4-6 strong, well-placed canes as a main framework and prune out all others from the base. If you haven't done so already, tie the selected canes into the support your rose is growing on, bending them as close to horizontal as possible.



Once you've identified the canes that make up the main framework, prune out most of the side canes (laterals) growing along their length, cutting each back to just above the third or fourth bud from the main cane, leaving a short stub. If a few are well placed to fill a gap in the framework, leave them, tying them into the support.

Next, turn your attention to the main framework. It's usually not necessary to cut back primary canes. However, on well-established climbing roses, these canes can sometimes become woody and less productive. If so, remove one or two to encourage more vigorous growth from the base. It's easiest to remove them in sections. You may need a pair of loppers for this.

Finish by securing all remaining canes to your support. Over the summer regularly deadhead spent flowers that form on the laterals, cutting them back to just above the third or fourth bud from the primary cane. This keeps aggressive laterals under control, so you have less pruning next year.