



The Northeast Rose Gardener

A Quarterly Newsletter

*By
Angelina & Mike Chute*

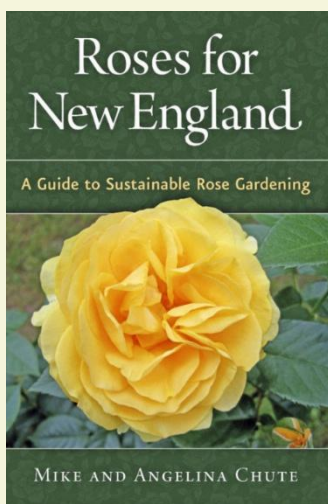
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The Northeast Rose Gardener is a quarterly e-newsletter written and edited by Mike and Angelina Chute and focuses on basic rose horticulture. Each issue will contain seasonal advice as well as tips and personal anecdotes from our over two decades of rose gardening in the Northeast.

In this Issue of the
Northeast Rose Gardener

you'll find:

- When to Prune •
Roses
- How to Prune •
Roses
- How to Deadhead •
Roses



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Winter 2025

Mid-winter weather in New England presents a challenge with January being the coldest month followed by a snowy and unpredictable February. Regardless, spring always arrives and now is not too soon to think about your garden. We have big doings planned for our gardens this year with new walls for the raised beds as well as adding more varieties.

February is also the start of our 2025 Lecture Series. We presented our *Selecting Sustainable Roses* program two weeks ago with a return to the Southeastern Connecticut Home and Garden Show, followed by a couple of mid-winter garden club programs. Everyone is ready for spring. In April, we will provide a demonstration on growing roses in containers at the Rose Island Roses Societies' (RIRS) April meeting – the public is welcome. On June 7, we present a lecture on basic rose horticulture as part of the RIRS Annual Rose Show – again the public is welcome and both events are free. (See sidebar for more information.) And in-between, we have loads of garden club programs scheduled throughout the year. (See our 2025 Lecture Series listed on our blog: therosejournal.com.) On top of all this is planning for our next adventure to France this fall. We'll rent a car and head for the Loire Valley and its castles and vineyards then on to Paris.

Spring pruning is the rose gardener's Rite of Spring and is the topic of this issue's the **Northeast Rose Gardener**. As the early spring sun in March climbs higher in the sky, cool bright afternoons in the rose garden become especially pleasant. We take my time and enjoy this annual ritual as

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The Rose
Journal

new roses in containers wait patiently to be planted once pruning is complete. Each season provides its own unique enjoyment and it all starts with spring.

Spring Pruning



Rose Bed Before Spring Pruning

A spectacular garden full of well-tended roses with a full flush of color starts with careful pruning in early spring. There are many benefits of pruning - it increases flower production, controls the shape and size of the bush, removes damaged canes and becomes the first defense against destructive insects and diseases.

We are available to present rose programs to groups in person and through Zoom. If your organization needs a speaker, even at the last minute, let us know. Contact [mike at rosesolutions](#) for more details..

Deadheading Roses

Deadheading is the removal of spent blooms to reset the rose for the next bloom cycle. It is a necessary practice to ensure the continuation of flower production on any **remontant**, or repeat-blooming, variety. Cut the stem of the spent bloom back to just above any leaf at a point thick enough to support a new cane and flower. It is not necessary to prune at a



Rose Bed After Spring Pruning

While it may seem early to start thinking about pruning roses, it will only be a few weeks before we'll be back out in our gardens. Late March and early April, or when the forsythia blooms, is the time to begin spring pruning. There seems to be a lot of anxiety around the task of pruning, especially for those new to growing roses, but put the anxiety aside and be assured that it's almost impossible to damage a rose with poor pruning.

The first question novice rose gardeners ask is "When do I prune?" In New England the answer is in the spring at the end of dormancy. The cliché, "prune when the forsythia blooms," is good advice. Blooming forsythia indicates that the soil temperature has warmed enough to initiate plant growth. This timing will vary in colder parts of the Northeast. It's good to remember, though, that pruning too early may subject the plants to damage from late season frosts, so it does no harm to prune later rather than earlier.

Pruning

Tools

Before you start to prune, make sure you have the right

five-leaflet leaf. It is more important to prune where a growth bud is located and buds can be found at a seven or even a nine-leaflet leaf. This is where the next stem will grow.

equipment. Proper pruning requires sharp tools that provide nice clean cuts which makes pruning easier and more enjoyable.



**RI Rose Society
Meeting:
April 10, 2025**

**Free & Open to
the Public**

Join members at their April meeting for their "Spring Rose Care" Program. Consulting Rosarians will be available to answer



Bypass Pruners

Hand pruners – The best hand pruners are *bypass* •
pruners with two opposing curved blades that cut
like scissors

questions and Mike Chute will discuss how to plant and grow beautiful roses in containers.

The RI Rose Society's 26th Annual Rose Show will be held on June 7. Come to see the beautiful roses on display as well attend Mike's lecture on Basic Rose Horticulture.



Loppers

The meeting & Rose Show will be held at Shepherd of the Valley Church in Hope, RI For more information, visit www.rirs.org

Loppers – heavier tool for thick canes •

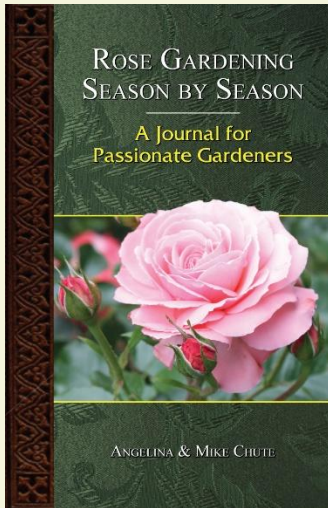
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flowering varieties.

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prickles, or thorns.

What to Prune

The first task to accomplish when pruning roses – and the easiest - is to remove all the dead, diseased and damaged canes. Dead canes are easily identified because they are brown or black. If the dead cane leads down to the crown or bud union of the plant, prune it out. Make sure your pruners are sharp because you want a clean cut, leaving no stubs.

Next, prune off any damaged or diseased wood. Damaged canes are maybe caused by birds flying or nesting in the rose bushes and/or snow load. Diseased canes, such as canes with dark lesions, canker, spots and blemishes should be pruned below the damage.

Where to Prune



Prune 1/4" above the outside facing bud eye

Inspect each cane for swollen active buds (bud eyes), that indicate healthy tissue and cut a quarter inch above an outside facing bud eye. (**Bud eyes** are nodes where the leaves join the stems and from which new stems grow.) This encourages new stems to grow away from the center. Look for the pith or cross-section of the cut to resemble a freshly cut apple. If there is any brown staining in the pith, remove more of the cane. If there are any **suckers**, stems growing from the rootstock below the bud union, snip them off cleanly close to the rootstock.



Creamy White Pith

Next comes the real challenge of pruning roses, keeping in mind that how a rose is pruned depends on the type of rose.

Climbing Roses



Mike Pruning Clair Matin

It's easiest to prune climbing roses when you can clearly see the canes before foliage emerges. After removing the dead, damaged and diseased canes, prune climbers sparingly in the spring. Remove twiggy stems and long spindly canes that won't produce any blooms. At the same time, reposition longer canes and tie them off along a trellis or structure. The new growth is supple in early spring and you can train canes to grow horizontally. Horizontal placement of the canes encourages the development of lateral stems growing from the main canes. This will produce more blooms throughout the summer, especially with proper deadheading.

If you see old gray canes growing from the bud union on an older climber and you want to encourage new canes to emerge, prune 1 or 2 of them out. You may need loppers or a pruning saw to remove them.

Postpone pruning once-blooming climbing roses until the bloom cycle is over because many once-blooming varieties bloom on old wood - last year's growth.

Other Types of Roses



Other Types of Roses

Hybrid teas and Grandifloras: After a very cold winter, some hybrid teas and grandifloras may need to be pruned within inches of the bud union. If you want to be more conservative, then make your first pruning cuts higher and re-prune a few weeks later. Remember to prune back until you see the creamy pith in the cane. Finally, shape the plant, keeping three to six canes.

Floribundas: Leave more wood on floribundas by cutting the bush back no more than one third, thinning out the center and shaping the bush. The goal is to have a mass display of color – more canes mean more blooms.

Shrub roses, old garden roses, and species roses: Prune in moderation. Shape the bushes, leaving them full and natural looking but remove no more than a quarter of the canes. On mature bushes, occasionally eliminate a few older, woody canes to

stimulate new growth. Like climbers, prune once-bloomers as soon as the flowering is done.

Miniature roses: These can be carefully pruned •
like hybrid teas or just thinned boldly by removing half the stems with hedge clippers and fine-tuning with hand pruners. Eight weeks later the method used will not be detectable.

Pruning is a vital part of rose care. It may seem daunting at first, but with practice you will develop your own strategies. Pruning techniques are part science, but it's also part art. Use your creative eye to form each rose to your own artistic vision.

Next Issue: Look for our Spring 2025 issue of *The Northeast Rose Gardener* in May.

Happy Gardening !
Mike and Angelina Chute