

Deadheading Roses

There are *many* different types of roses — more than a **hundred species** occurring naturally and **thousands of cultivars** created through hybridization.

*This horticulture hint will focus on a few rose types that are **growing in our civic gardens**.*

Roses are roughly classified in three categories:

- **Wild** (or species roses) — Naturally occurring roses. *Rosa rugosa* (the “beach rose”) is an example.
- **Old Garden** — Roses developed *before* 1867, most of which **bloom once** on old wood (canes). The Damask rose is an example.
- **Modern Garden** — Roses developed *after* 1867. These are the popular garden roses of today.

Roses in Our Civic Gardens

The roses growing (or to be planted) in our civic gardens are all Modern Garden roses. This category is further divided into general **classes**:

- Hybrid tea
- Shrub
- Pernetiana
- English / David Austin
- Polyantha
- Canadian Hardy
- Floribunda
- Landscape (Ground Cover)
- Grandiflora
- Miniature
- Climbing and rambling
- Patio

Our gardens include:

- **‘The Fairy’ Rose** (class is Polyantha, meaning many flowered) — A short plant with many tiny flowers. Blooms from spring to fall.
- **Bonica® Rose** (class is Floribunda, also meaning many flowered) — A vigorous and tough shrub rose with clusters of shell pink flowers. Blooms from spring to late fall.
- **Knock Out® Rose** (class is Landscape) — A long-blooming, disease-resistant rose designed to look good with little care.
- **Drift® Groundcover Rose** (class is Landscape) — A cross between a full-size groundcover rose and miniature. Has a low, spreading habit and repeat blooms.

Why Deadhead?

Most modern roses bloom continuously (until stopped by frost) on any new canes produced during the growing season. Supporting the rose flower through its life cycle takes plant energy.

If your goal is to have new flowers forming all the time, then you want to be always directing the plant’s energy toward new flower production.

You do this by taking away the older flowers, and flowers that are developing or have developed into fruit (rose hips). This encourages the plant to focus its energy and resources on forming *new* shoots and blooms.

Deadheading Roses

Where Do I Cut?

If the flower cluster still has some good-looking flowers or unopened buds

Just pinch or snip below the base of spent flower, called the **peduncle**. This will free up plant energy for the other flowers in the cluster.

If it is early in the growing season

For the first cuts of the season, pinch or snip just below the base of the flower, or prune back to a three-leaflet leaf, making a cut above an outward-facing bud.

When you cut a stem, the next bud below the cut will be stimulated to break into growth.

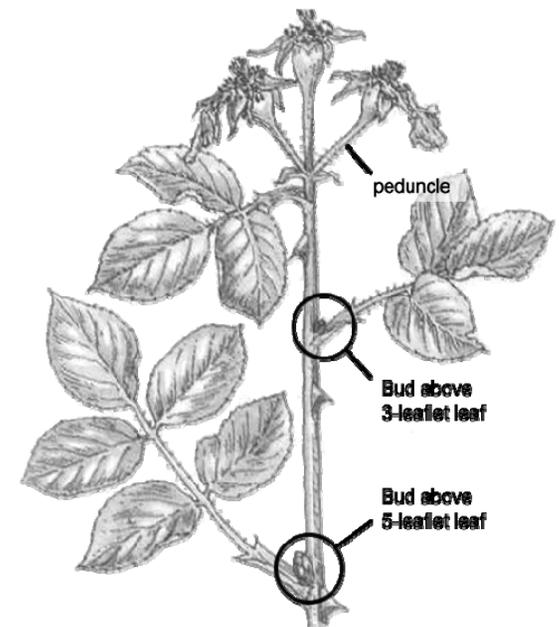
Cut above an outward-facing bud. You want the new growth to go out to the side, rather than in toward the middle of the plant.

If the rose is young or newly planted

On young newly planted roses, you may want to prune back only to a three-leaflet leaf because the leaves are needed to produce the carbohydrates that fuel stem and root growth.

If the growing season is well underway

You can prune back to a five-leaflet leaf, making a cut above an outward-facing bud.



What If I Don't Deadhead?

Many popular rose cultivars, such as the Knock Out, have been bred not to require deadheading. They are supposedly “self-cleaning.” The old blooms fall off on their own. Even if you do nothing, these roses will look pretty good, but they, too, will benefit from deadheading.

When to Stop Deadheading

By **October**, stop deadheading so that new plant growth can harden off before winter. Leaving the plant alone will also encourage it to enter dormancy.

Once you stop pruning, the plant may produce fruit (rose hips). Rose hips are high in vitamin C and a source of food for birds. Birds disperse the seeds contained within the hip.