



# Volunteer Handbook

SCHENECTADY CENTRAL PARK

  
*Rose Garden*  
RESTORATION COMMITTEE

# Welcome!

Anyone with an interest in roses and gardening can be a volunteer. Prior rose knowledge or experience is not required. We offer training throughout the season.

We are so happy you are volunteering your time to maintain and preserve this beautiful Rose Garden.

With thanks and appreciation,



## BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT - Matt Cuevas

VICE PRESIDENT - Yolanda Matura

TREASURER - Ilene LaMalfa

INTERIM SECRETARY - Sean O'Brien

Pam Pearlman – Garden Operations  
Manager

Eileen DiGioacchino

Roxanne Hill

Ed Zemeck

## Our Mission:

The **Rose Garden Restoration Committee**, through the work of dedicated volunteers strives to maintain and improve the Rose Garden located in Schenectady's Central Park through coordinated maintenance work, and projects to ensure the garden remains an asset and benefit for the enjoyment of residents of the City of Schenectady and others who may visit the Rose Garden.

[www.schenectadyrose.org](http://www.schenectadyrose.org)



# Rose Garden History

**In late 1959, a new Rose Garden** was sited at the Wright Avenue entrance to Schenectady's Central Park, in an area that originally had been tennis courts.

**Charles D. Brown, a Schenectady Rose Society member, laid out the original design.**

**Over several decades the garden flourished** through guidance from Col. Brown, the Schenectady Rose Society, and the City Parks Department.

**By the 1970s** the garden boasted 7,000 bushes, reflection pools, an arched stone bridge built over an existing creek and a Japanese inspired garden along Central Parkway

**But alas, in the 1980s** the garden began its slow decline as city budget cutbacks took hold and the garden hit rock bottom by 1993.

## **By this point...**

- ▶ The irrigation system did not work.
- ▶ The rose bushes were dying.
- ▶ The weeds choked the rose beds.

**In 1995 David Gade**, a rosarian tutored under Col. Brown, spearheaded a group of concerned citizens. This group became the foundation for the Rose Garden Restoration Committee (RGRC). **The RGRC incorporated as a 501C3 non-profit organization**, which allowed fundraising to begin restoration.

**Over the last 20 years** the garden master plan was successfully accomplished.

**The group drafted a garden  
“Master Plan” in 2005**

- ▶ Reconfigured rose beds for better access.
- ▶ The obsolete reflection pools were removed.
- ▶ A new irrigation system was put in.
- ▶ The existing upper pond was refurbished (2008).
- ▶ New access to the garden from Central Parkway was added with the Hillside staircase and Gate House (2009). The Gate House is a garden folly and functions as our tool & maintenance shed.
- ▶ The Center Fountain (2011) became a new focal point.
- ▶ The lower pond area was redesigned to be a more natural looking water feature (2014).
- ▶ The Pergola (2017) our final project frames the back of the garden and leads to the hillside shade garden.
- ▶ Hillside perennial shade garden completed in 2020-21. The city rebuilt the staircase up the hillside, which dates back to the 1930s.

Now you can enjoy a stroll in our garden to see well over 130 varieties of roses with identification labels. View our various perennial gardens. Admire the cool leafy shade garden. Listen to the trickle of water from the fountain or waterfall and spy goldfish in the lower pond. The garden is a delight any time of day, any time of the year, even when it is covered in a blanket of snow.

For more info, please visit our website: [www.schenectadyrose.org](http://www.schenectadyrose.org)



## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

- ▶ Anyone who has an interest in roses and gardening can be a volunteer.
- ▶ The garden opens in early April and remains open through the end of October.
- ▶ Prior rose knowledge or experience is not required.
- ▶ We offer training throughout the season.

### To prevent the transmission of plant diseases and viruses:

- ▶ The RGRC provides all the tools you will need for working in the garden.
- ▶ We do provide work gloves but if you prefer to use your own, we ask that you keep a pair just for working in the rose garden.

## Weekly Work Sessions

Work Sessions are Weather permitting.

### Tuesday Mornings

April-October

9 – 11 am

Coordinated by  
*Pam Pearlman*

### Saturday Mornings

April-May

9 – 11 am

September – October

9 – 11 am

coordinated by  
*Matt Cuevas, Yolanda  
Matura or Ilene LaMalfa*

### Thursday Evenings

June-August

6 – 7:30 pm

coordinated by...  
*Matt Cuevas, Yolanda  
Matura or Ilene LaMalfa*

## SPRING (April – June)

As soon as the snow has melted, we start working in the garden. During April there are several important tasks that need to be accomplished.

1

### **First the rose bushes need to be pruned.**

- ▶ This means removing the canes that have died and then shaping the bushes for spring growth.
- ▶ We will provide training on how to prune as well as send out a pruning training video to help you get started.

2

### **The second project is planting new rose bushes.**

- ▶ We order bare root roses, which arrive in mid-April.
- ▶ Most of the roses are planted during the Saturday sessions.
- ▶ We will demonstrate how the roses need to be planted.
- ▶ We also plant potted roses depending on what is available and needed in the garden.

3

### **The final task is cleaning out the leaves and debris.**

- ▶ the perennial beds, which includes the upper and lower pond beds.
- ▶ the pergola and hillside beds
- ▶ the beds along Iroquois Way and Wright Ave.

Volunteers play an integral role in the maintenance of the rose garden but as the garden has grown over the years, we also rely on outside services to help maintain the garden.

We use *Grasshopper Gardens* for:

- ▶ spring cleanup.
- ▶ weekly mowing
- ▶ edging
- ▶ mulching of the rose beds
- ▶ spraying roses for insects and disease
- ▶ fall clean up.
- ▶ winterizing the rose bushes

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## Weeding and General Activities

Once the roses are pruned, and the new roses are planted, we spend time on weeding:

- ▶ the rose beds
- ▶ the perennial garden beds.
- ▶ other general cleanup activities.
- ▶ grasses in the lower pond are cut back.
- ▶ the hydrangeas are shaped up.

5

## In May we apply Rose Tone fertilizer

- ▶ Rose Tone Fertilizer is applied to each rose bush to promote healthy growth. This usually takes a few sessions.
- ▶ We will provide instructions on how to do this.

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**By the 2nd week in June** the rose buds will slowly begin to open and

**By the 3<sup>rd</sup> week** you will be thrilled to see how beautiful the garden looks in its first full bloom.

Realizing how much time and effort you have contributed since April, it leaves you with a great feeling of accomplishment, pride and pure joy.

## SUMMER (July-August)

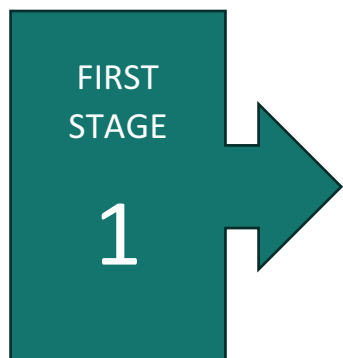
Ah summer in the rose garden. No better place to be.

Once the roses have finished their first bloom, to keep them blooming all summer we remove the spent blooms.

This process is known as **deadheading**.

Deadheading is the removal of finished blooms to encourage further blooms and improve the appearance and shape of the rose.

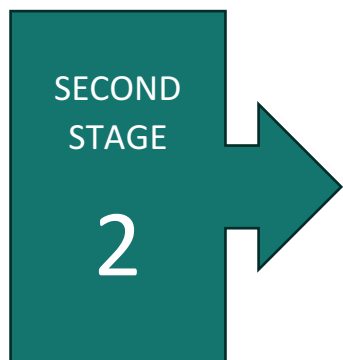
There are two stages to deadheading:



***Removing a finished bloom from a flowering head.***

To do this, cut off the finished flower, just below where the base of the flower joins the stem.

Leave any remaining buds or blooms to continue flowering.



***Removing a flowering head once all the blooms in the cluster have finished blooming.***

Remove the entire flowering head by cutting the stem just above the first leaf with five leaflets.



## FALL (September – October)

### By mid-September

To maintain a beautiful appearance in the garden:

- ▶ We stop deadheading to slow down new growth.
- ▶ Remove the dried petals from the roses that have bloomed and leave the rose hips.
- ▶ Rake up all the leaves at the base of the roses.

#### Disease Prevention

Many fungal diseases that affect roses overwinter on the rose or the litter on the ground.

Removing this material will reduce problems next spring.

### Towards the end of October

We cut back some of the perennials in the garden:

- ▶ such as the catmint plants under the pergola
- ▶ those along Iroquois Way
- ▶ Give all the beds a final weeding.

### Volunteer Luncheon

Each year in appreciation of our wonderful volunteers, the RGRC hosts a luncheon on a Saturday in October at the Thomas Isabella Pavilion in Central Park.

We can't thank all of you enough for the time and effort that you give to the Schenectady Central Park Rose Garden.

## WINTER (November)

### Winterizing Roses

By the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week in November

We use *Grasshopper Gardens* for the following:

- ▶ cuts back all the roses bushes to a height of 18" to 24".  
This form of pruning is in preparation for the dormant period of winter.
- ▶ They remove all the debris from the rose beds and then
- ▶ add 2 to 3 shovelfuls of mulch in the center of each rosebush to help prevent the roots, etc. from freezing.

Additionally, the following are winterized:

- ▶ The irrigation system is shut down,
- ▶ The fountain is shrink wrapped,
- ▶ The ponds are closed down

...now all is quiet in the rose garden for the winter,  
and we anticipate the arrival of spring



## Rose Pruning

Pruning is about more than just looks.

It also improves the health of the rose bush, prevents disease, and encourages better and more flowering.

There are different pruning strategies for different times of the year, but the goal is always to open up the plant to provide better circulation and to prevent fungal growth.

# Pruning Roses

## [How To Prune Roses – Heirloom Roses](#)

Pruning is an important part of rose care and can sometimes seem daunting to new gardeners. It is not hard to learn, and the results are well worth the effort!

Use the acronym PRUNE to remember the basic pruning process. This method applies to the most popular garden roses such as Hybrid Teas, Shrubs, and Floribundas, but Climbers and Ramblers require more specialized techniques.

Whether you are deadheading blooms during the summer or performing your annual spring cutback, it is important to consider how a rose grows. How you prune a particular rose will always be the same. Even a beginner gardener can prune well! Roses, unlike other plants, can send new shoots out of old wood. An older own-root rose can be rejuvenated by cutting it right to the ground, and it will still produce new shoots. This means that even a novice pruner would have a hard time killing a rose bush by pruning.

### **P** – PREPARE THE PLANT

Cut the plant back to about waist height so you can work safely

### **R** – REMOVE ALL BROKEN, DEAD DYING OR DISEASED WOOD

Branches that look dry, shriveled or black should be removed as they will no longer produce new growth. The healthy canes will be brown or green and firm.

Remove canes that are crossing or rubbing, as they will create weak spots.

### **U** – UNDERSTAND THE PLANT

Know what type of rose bush you are pruning, and how you want the bush to look as it grows out.

Shape the plant with this future growth in mind.

Make final cuts at a 45-degree angle and about ¼ inch above outward facing bud eyes.

### **N** – NOTHING LEFT BEHIND

Clean up all cuttings, dead leaves, and other debris from around the plant. Do not compost as it could spread pathogens.

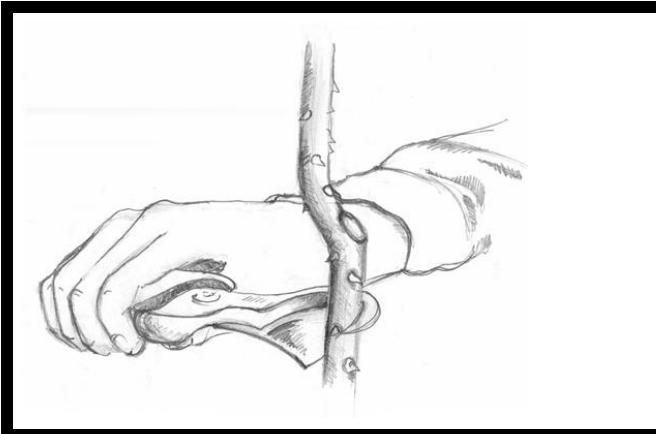
Leaving the area as clean as possible will minimize the growth of diseases.

### **E** – ENJOY YOUR ROSES

That's it! Enjoy your hard work!

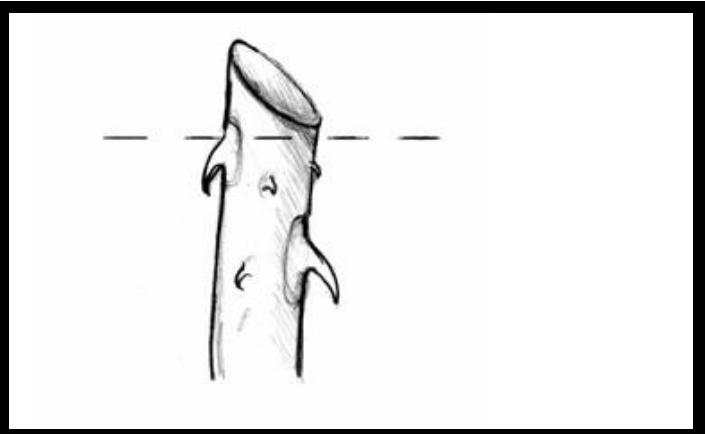
If you want to enjoy some cut roses, cut the stem right above the first five-leaflet leaf under the flower and immediately place the cut stem into a clean bucket of lukewarm water.

- ▶ Remove dead and injured wood. When winter damage occurs, remove all dead and injured wood. This may leave bush only half to a third the size it was in fall.
- ▶ Prune away weak, spindly canes and cross canes. Shorten remaining canes.
- ▶ REMOVE branches crossing through bush's center weak stems.
- ▶ CUTS TO BUD UNION should be flush to it.
- ▶ Remove Suckers from Bud Union



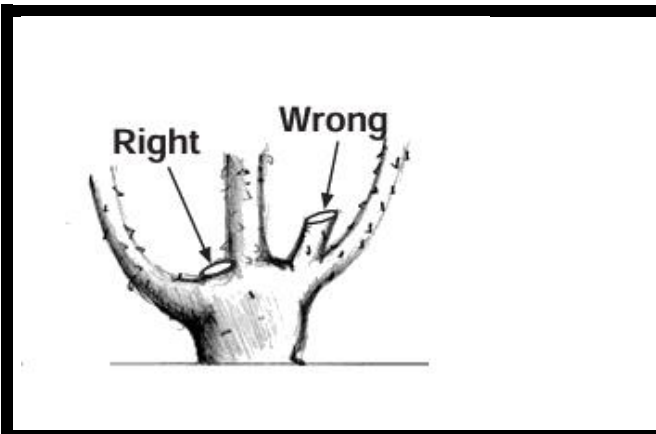
PRUNING SHEARS - Scissor action type make the cleanest cuts. Hold them so that the cutting blade is down.

[pruning-diagrams.pdf \(msstate.edu\)](http://pruning-diagrams.pdf(msstate.edu))



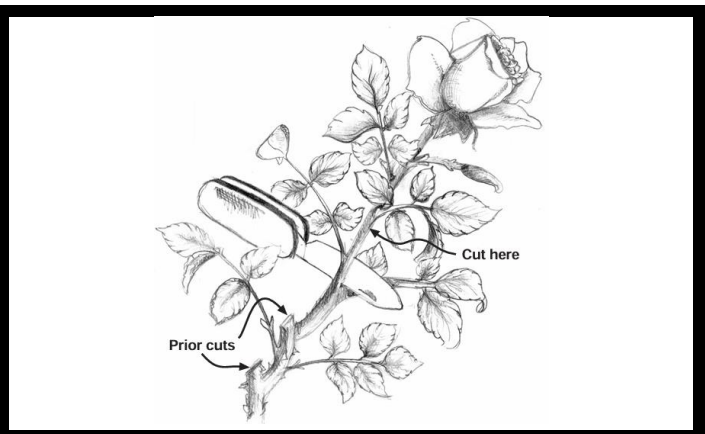
PROPER CUT - slants at almost 45-degree angle, upper point is 1/3 to 1/4 inch above growth eye, lower point is slightly above level of eye on opposite side of stem.

[pruning-diagrams.pdf \(msstate.edu\)](http://pruning-diagrams.pdf(msstate.edu))



CUTS TO BUD UNION should be flush to it. Any stubs may die back into union, allowing later entry for disease.

[pruning-diagrams.pdf \(msstate.edu\)](http://pruning-diagrams.pdf(msstate.edu))



CUTTING A ROSE Allow at least two five leaflet leaves to remain on the new shoot when you cut a rose.

[pruning-diagrams.pdf \(msstate.edu\)](http://pruning-diagrams.pdf(msstate.edu))



# Deadheading Roses

Deadheading is the removal of finished blooms to encourage further blooms and improve the appearance and shape of the rose.

There are two stages to deadheading.

The first is mainly aesthetic, removing the brown finished blooms so you can enjoy the remaining flowers without interruption.

The second stage encourages new blooms and helps to maintain a compact shape.

[How to Deadhead a Rose \(davidaustinroses.com\)](https://www.davidaustinroses.com)

## Step 1

Remove a finished bloom from a flowering head



Pinch or cut off the finished flower, just below where the base of the flower joins the stem. Leave any remaining buds or blooms to continue flowering. Continue this as required throughout the flowering season.

## Step 2

Remove a flowering head



Remove the entire flowering head by cutting the stem just above the first leaf with five leaflets. Once all the flowering heads have been removed, cut any disproportionately tall stems back to the height of the rest of the plant, creating a neat, rounded shape as you go.