

TALKING ROSES July '18

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“Remember that children, marriages, and flower gardens reflect the kind of care they get.”

Jackson Brown Jnr.

In the Rose Garden with Ludwig

We hope that we didn't scare you with our monster rose thorns banner. This month we want to show you how easy pruning really is and that one needs not have any fear what so ever!

It is the beginning of July and the middle of winter. The lawn is frosty-white early in the mornings but our roses are still in good flower!

Of course, with the cloudless skies, it warms up to 25°C at midday, which is really the type of temperature roses prefer.

Roses are very sensitive to light intensity. Due to the sun rays being slanted from the North, the stems and blooms also follow so that they can soak up as much sun light as possible.

Just look how the stems and blooms move towards the light.

Some of the blooms right now are simply enormous. That is due to the growth slowing down and allowing more time for more and larger petals to form.

The more mature bushes have decided to go into dormancy, partially due to us having gradually reduced the irrigation cycles.

The leaves are turning a rich autumn golden-yellow. The upper leaves mostly remain green. They are still making food to be stored beneath the bark.

The yellow leaves at this time of the year are absolutely normal.

Plants that have lost their foliage due to black spot a while ago were not able to store enough food to over winter and had no choice but to sprout again.

Such new short reddish shoots are mostly blind. Without a leaf below the sprouting eye, making the necessary food, a flowering bud cannot be formed. This is not a problem. After pruning they will produce flowers in spring again.

Black spot denuded stems sprout red water shoots that don't flower.

Roses planted over the past months keep on growing happily, but they still need to be pruned. See more on this below.

Recently planted bushes in full leaf still need to be pruned.

Step by Step rose care for July

July is the best time to prune roses in most parts of the country.

Whether it is done early or late in July doesn't affect the start of flowering in spring. If pruning is delayed into August, the flowering will be delayed accordingly.

If they are still flowering right now, you are welcome to delay to the end of the month and enjoy. One can also leave the odd flowering stems on the pruned bush and cut them back later.

This shrub will only be pruned once these blooms are spent.

I have already given three pruning demonstrations this season. When I start cutting the sample bushes very soon the questions come from the audience – “Why are you are not looking to outside facing eyes and why are the cuts you make not slanted.”

And this after giving pruning demonstrations and writing about pruning for well over 40 years. That is how ingrained such "Do's and Don'ts" are. The reasoning for wanting to do so does not apply anymore and certainly not for our climate.

Rose pruning is easy, and you cannot prune wrongly!

However - there is always this however - roses can be manipulated and will react to it.

Partially, it depends on what sort of performance we expect from the pruning, as well as the condition of the bush and to a degree the growth characteristics of a variety.

A sharp pair of secateurs, a quality lopper and pig skin gloves will make the task a breeze.

If you have limited water, prune lightly, leaving short side stems on the main branches to enable them to quickly form new green leaves which give power to the roots.

If one wants lots of blooms and a good show of colour from hybrid teas a light pruning is advisable. The side stems in the centre of the bush are best removed. They would green out and prevent the sunlight falling onto the main branches which will restrict the sprouting of good strong stems from the base.

For good long-stemmed blooms, prune a bush down to about knee height leaving 3 to 4 stems.

Floribundas are expected to provide a show from base to top and they too are pruned back to about knee height. Light pruning results in the lower part of the bush being denuded of leaves.

‘Iceberg’ is the odd one out. It can grow from the old wood for years and the rule of cutting out old stems and keeping younger ones does not apply. It depends on the height and spread of the bush and how much you want to neaten them up.

Spire roses are cut down to about chest height with older stems cut out. They will soon flower again at the desired height of 2m plus.

The spreading Colourscape types i.e. ‘My Granny’ or ‘Deloitte & Touche’ can easily be trimmed with a hedge shear. They grow sideways into the light, so opening up of the centre of the bushes is not as important.

The Panarosa varieties too start spreading and are trimmed back to a manageable height and width, with most of the twiggy growth removed.

Pruning and espaliering Climbing roses takes extra time and the determining factor is where one would like most of the flowering to take place. The long climbing canes are maintained, maybe shortened somewhat and best tied to a support be it a pole a horizontal stretched wire or fanned out on a wall.

Most of the Mini roses are simply cut back to between 30 and 50 cm and many of the basal stems removed. However, they might have grown into nice hip-high shrublets and in that case one does a light pruning, cutting away obvious small twigs to open up the bush. Watch a quick and easy video here...

Standard roses are easy to prune. You simply show no mercy. They need to be cut back severely to maintain a neat shape.

The AFTER PRUNING entails spraying the remaining stems with our cocktail that suffocates scale and other insects and some diseases on the remaining stems. Use it at double the recommended strength - 100ml in 10l water. If you noted lots of scale insects on the remaining stems it is best to brush them loose before spraying.

We don't recommend using lime sulphur. Why torture your nose?

The important part is to check the friability of the soil. Pushing in a digging fork next to some bushes will show. If it goes in easily, the soil is good.

Sprinkle VIGOLONGER controlled release fertiliser around the bush and lightly turn over the soil with the old mulch or some extra compost and water well. The VIGOLONGER fertiliser releases small doses of fertiliser over up to 8 months. It truly gives the plant a very balanced nutrition, where you can apply Vigorosa in September and again in December and March instead of monthly.

If it is difficult to push the fork or a spade down it is best to do some good soil rejuvenation.

Spread out a thick layer of compost and our preferred soil conditioner (peanut shells) and the VIGOLONGER and proceed to turn the soil and additives over. Break up any lumps and work everything in well so that it is equally mixed.

If some of the roots of the roses are loosened in the process this is not a problem. They love the freshly aerated environment. Water very well after this.

We show you how to prune all the different rose types on our YouTube channel.

Remember that pruning to roses is like having a hair cut for us. There is no pain involved and all that happens is that they grow back more strongly!

Rose of the month: 'VLV KAAPLAND' LUDmoonsun(N)

Comparable to the world famous 'Queen Elizabeth' rose. The never ending production of firm stems will quickly transform young plants into tall, formally upright bushes which will not be without flowers throughout the long growing season. The blooms are well shaped, pickable, and of a deep salmon pink colour.

Interestingly, this salmon coloured rose resulted from a cross between two yellow varieties.

Available from all our branches at a promotional rose of the month price.

News from our Rose Centres

Ludwig's Rose Farm

We have closed up our restaurant a little and there is a cosy fire going, so we welcome you to pay us a visit for a warm coffee and something delicious to eat this July.

Ludwig's Pretoria East

The Rose Café is the perfect setting for coffee with friends and family.

We welcome you to join us for a hands on demo on how to prune your roses. We show you how easy it is. Free of charge and booking is not necessary. You are welcome to bring your gardener.

Ludwig's Roses EGOLI

Pruning demos: Sat 7 & Sun 8 July 10h30

Ludwig's Roses Winelands

Pruning demos: Sat 14 10h00 & Sun 15 July 10h30

Ludwig's Roses Cape Town

Pruning demos Sat 14 July 14h00

Ludwig's Roses Big Red Barn

Pruning demo: Sat 21 July 10h00

Enjoy pruning!

Rose greetings,

Ludwig