

**Master Gardener Class Series
February 14, 2008**



St. Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is said to have originated in Roman Empire times, when February 14th was the day Romans celebrated Juno, the goddess of love and marriage. The emperor Claudius cancelled all marriages when he had trouble getting men to leave home to join the army, believing that marriage was stopping the men from doing their duty to Rome. A short time later, an early Christian priest named Valentine worked fervently to marry couples secretly. He was convicted by the Roman prefect for this "crime" and was killed on February 14, 270 ad. Soon after, he was named a martyr and was sainted by the church. The church often changed pagan holidays to church holidays in an effort to stop pagan worship, and to that end the church created St. Valentine's Day to honor the martyred priest.

Valentine's Day Menu

Brownies
Petite Cherry Cheesecakes
Vegetable Tray
Chips
Dip

SPRING PRUNING OF ROSES

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April is the time to prepare garden roses for the coming growing season. Winter mulch and foam covers should be removed as soon as new growth becomes apparent. Since a late freeze is still possible, it is a good idea to keep the winter mulch nearby for quick protection.

The next step is to prune roses to remove any dead, diseased or otherwise damaged canes and to control the quantity and quality of flowers produced. Cut back badly damaged or dead canes down to the base of the plant. Completely remove any suckers or shoots that arise from the rootstock. Slightly damaged canes only need to be cut back to healthy tissue. Be sure to cut back to an outward-facing bud so that new growth will occur toward the outside of the plant. This will ensure good air circulation around the plant, which helps prevent disease infection.

To prevent overcrowding inside bush-type roses, aim to have 4-8 strong canes cut to a uniform height, which

spread out away from the center of the plant in the shape of a V.

Climbing roses are pruned differently, depending on what type of climbers they are. Ever-blooming climbers that bloom throughout the growing season should need little pruning the first few years. As with all roses, remove any dead or weak wood. Thereafter, remove the oldest, longer canes that have become unproductive. Younger canes (2-3 years old) produce the most flowers and should be cut back to two-to-three healthy buds.

Climbers that bloom only once should be pruned immediately after blooms fade, since buds form on the previous year's growth. As with raspberries, canes that bear flowers this year should be completely removed to allow space for the new canes to develop and produce buds for next year's season.

Shrub roses rarely need to be shaped, and heavy pruning may destroy their natural beauty. Pruning of shrub roses should be limited to removal of dead or damaged wood and thinning of excessive growth.



REF:

<http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/springpruning.html>