

Gardening

IN RECENT ISSUES we have talked about the pruning of fruit trees and bushes. Now we will have a short session on Roses. If you have not yet pruned your roses then you should do so right away. I will deal mainly with three classes of roses, H.T and floribundas, climbers and ramblers.

H.T. and floribundas.

Ideally these should be pruned in March but there is still time to do the work. With sharp tools – very important to make a good clean cut in all pruning – cut back to about six inches from the ground just above a bud that is growing outwards so that the bush will be open. Remove any old stumps or twiggy growth if present.

Climbers.

The work should be done in February but there is still time. Your aim must be to train the plant into a fan shape keeping the growths as straight as possible. Nails and string are needed and the ties should be tight. Young growth needed for the next season should be tied in as they develop, spaced in the fan at about a hand's breadth. Any unsightly or twiggy growths should be removed and the fan kept trimmed to space. Remember that climbing roses should be spur pruned.

Ramblers.

These produce the best flowers on lateral growths coming from the joints of branches produced during the previous season. Pruning, which you should do as soon as flowering is over, consists in cutting out all the

stems that have carried flowers. Do this right down to ground level. The young growths, which will provide flowers for the following year should be tied in to replace the old wood that you have removed. Don't forget to tie in firmly.

Be sure that you know the difference between a climbing rose which has flowers similar to H.T. or floribundas, and the ramblers which usually have 'double' blooms growing in groups.

Finally, in the autumn both for climbers and ramblers, be sure that every growth for the following year is tied in firmly and that weak and twiggy growth is removed. There are many other roses that I have not dealt with. Patio roses are becoming very popular and many of you delight in shrub roses and species roses, which are those that were once 'wild' roses. Keep them tidy and shapely cutting out all weak and useless growth and cut back any long spindly growth that rarely bear flowers.

I hope that I have been helpful and that as a result you will enjoy one of the loveliest of flowers.

A.V. Mitchell.

