

## Pruning

July is the best time to prune in the Western Cape. The purpose of pruning is to stimulate growth and produce flowers. Pay particular attention at this time of year to roses, fruit trees, hydrangeas, evergreen plants (citrus, camellias) and bougainvillea.

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**The first rule about pruning is to not be intimidated by the thought of pruning!**

- Most mistakes will grow out anyway and it is better for the plant to be pruned than to leave it to grow on uncontrolled.
- Pruning is usually done in mid-July to encourage new growth, remove dead or diseased wood, to improve air and light movement in the centre of the plant and to improve the shape of the plant. Use a good pair of sharp secateurs. For the thick branches use long-handled loppers.
- Remove damaged or diseased branches as well as weak and spindly twigs.

### Rose Pruning

Prune to open up the centre of the plant. The cut should be a clean one, at a 45° angle, above a bud that is facing outward.

Remove suckers that have grown below the graft union.

Seal with Steriseal and spray the plant and the surrounding soil with lime sulphur

Most Hybrid tea and Floribunda roses are pruned like this so the blooms will develop on new wood. Exceptions to this are:

- Ramblers and Climbers which are pruned to remove damage and dead wood and to shape the plant and keep the size manageable. Ramblers can be pruned straight after flowering if required.
- Modern Shrub roses which need one third of the older branches to be removed.
- Miniature roses which just need to be shaped.

### Espalier

The ancient art of espalier is ideally suited to the smaller gardens of today. It is a form of pruning that trains a fruit tree to grow against a wall or within a confined space yet still bear large quantities of fruit.

The most basic form is the horizontal style. Starting with a tree that is one year old, cut the tip to encourage the development of multiple branches. Of these, the best three shoots are selected. Two are trained to grow horizontally, and the third is trained to grow up to form the next level. This provides the basic framework.

Any branch which tries to grow forward or behind gets snipped off. Forcing fruit trees to grow more horizontally increases the number of fruit bearing spurs. Use the space below the tree to grow low growing herbs and vegetables.

### **Bougainvillea Pruning**

When pruning bougainvillea, it is important to thin out rather than hack back. Otherwise, the normal guidelines apply.