Feature

How and When To Prune Roses
By Shawn Banks

If you feel you are amongst those intimidated people that just look at your rose bushes, love to see them bloom, watching as their amount of blossoms and fullness disappear year after year, well then, your roses are in desperate need of a makeover. Roses actually thrive with regular shaping and pruning. Poor pruning skills will never kill them, but it is best to learn proper timing, tools and techniques to prune most effectively.

GUIDELINES FOR DIFFERENT VARIETIES:

- Hybrid Teas (named after people and used as cut flowers) and Floribunda (many flowering, cross between hybrid and polyanthus, smaller, double blooms- ex: Amber Queen, Heidi Klum,) roses should be pruned in early spring. Prune hard (1/2 to 2/3 of its' height), while removing any old woody stem. Leave 3-5 healthy canes, evenly spaced around the plant, in various lengths of 18-24 inches, to show continuous blossoms. Any rose that has a rambler, a wild stem that flowers, will only bloom once and are not productive. They can be pruned to 2-3 inches from ground.
- Repeat bloomers include climbers and newer shrub varieties like KNOCK-OUT ROSES. Knock out roses should be left alone the first year or two after planting. Once established, 1/3 of the oldest canes, including diseased and dead wood,
should be removed twice a year after blossoming.

- Check on your rose bushes and prune them soon after they bloom, by deadheading during the season. The most important time to prune and shape the entire plant is when they are dormant, after the first frost, leaving at least an 18” height. It is important to prune them vigorously, to encourage new growth and many blossoms. Most roses will triple in size after they are pruned, so don’t be intimidated.

TOOLS YOU’LL NEED:

- Very sharp, clean, long-nose shears, preferably by-pass hand shears, to clear out smaller foliage and long handled by-pass loppers for larger, thicker canes. Do not use anvil pruners they don’t make clean cuts.
- Protective eye wear, if the roses are huge and overgrown
- Long sleeved shirt and pants to protect the body from thorn punctures
- Thick, long gloves to protect arms and hands from thorns and also to enable sucker growth removal
- An area/container/debris bin to keep the cut branches, like a wheelbarrow, tarp, large garbage container, depending on the size of the job

PRUNING TIPS:

Pruning roses should be done in winter and summer. There are different tasks to be done at different times of the year.

In fall and winter:

- After the first frost of the year (November or December) use the hedge clippers to remove the top portion of the plant. About 1/3 of the plant should be removed at this time. The remainder of the winter pruning should wait until late January or February.
- To ensure the roses get light and air circulation, prune out the center where dead or weak branches occur, along with any broken, dying or diseased wood. Stems that are shriveled or black should be pruned back to green tissue or removed. Any branch thinner than a pencil should also be removed. Trim back stems that are touching, by choosing the stronger stem to remain. Keep branches that are strong, green outside and cream and green color on the inside.
- Remove any sucker growth below the graft. These are best found by pulling away dirt, by following where the sucker originated below the bud union. Do not use a tool, but use your hand to twist the sucker until it breaks off. Use of pruning shears actually encourages sucker growth. Suckers can also be found several feet from source, so continue to pull until you find the bush and repeat, by twisting to break away. Roses grown from cuttings, not grafts, will not have suckers.
- If there are any signs of cane borers, seal them out using a non-toxic glue like Elmers
- Working with the strong branches, keeping the intended shape of the plant remove the unneeded canes by making a 45-degree cut just above a bud, down and away from bud leaving about one to two feet of cane.

In spring and summer:

- When plants begin to bloom, clear away some for personal use and
remove spent bloomed flowers. This is called deadheading and it will help the plant continue to re-blossom throughout the summer. Again, when deadheading, cut clean, on a 45 angle and make the incision on a strong stem that has at least five leaves above bud eye.

- Continue this process throughout the season when your rose blossoms.

**Guidelines for pruning in JC North Carolina:**

Before signs of early spring are evident (January to mid-February), delve into reshaping your roses of all kinds. Try to complete pruning before the warm snaps come, so that there is a minimal chance of pruning off new growth. This is also a good time to feed your roses.

**FEATURE PLANT**

**Pawpaw**  
*Asimina triloba*

by Shawn Banks

Pawpaw is a native plant of Eastern and Midwestern United States. Other than Pawpaw it may be known as Indian banana, Hoosier banana, poor man's banana, custard apple, custard banana or false banana. The reference to banana may be due to the way the fruit grows in a hand, like a banana. More likely the banana reference is due to the banana-like flavor of the fruit.

Pawpaw's native habitat is bottomlands, low areas near a river or stream. It may be found as an understory tree growing in part sun where it forms small groves. In the home landscape it will grow in full sun where it has a more pyramidal growth habit. The plant will have a mature height of 15 to 20 feet and be just as wide. Its natural growth habit is to have several root suckers, which may be one reason it's not a popular landscape plant. The drooping, medium green leaves are not much to look at with their 6 to 12 inches long and about half as wide egg or pear shape.

Dark purple flowers appear in mid-spring before leaves emerge. The flower is not all that noticeable and rarely makes one stop and stare. With an odor similar to that of rotten meat, flies are the pollinator for this plant. In order to produce fruit the plant needs to have another plant for cross-pollination, as most plants are not self-fertile.

The fruit is 2 to 5 inches long with a greenish yellow skin when ripe. Most people describe the flavor as that of a banana with the consistency of custard. An item of note is the toxic nature of the seeds. The endosperm (meat of the seed) contains alkaloids that may cause stomach problems if the seeds are chewed and swallowed. However the flesh of the fruit is said to contain natural cancer fighting compounds.

Pawpaw trees are mostly pest and disease free and make a good addition to a butterfly garden. Larva of the zebra swallowtail butterfly (*Eurytides Marcellus*) love to feed on the leaves of this plant. Other wildlife that
may be attracted to the pawpaw tree include opossum, raccoon, foxes and squirrels which are attracted by the delicious fruit.

Pawpaw trees are not easy to transplant from their native habitat. Luckily they are commercially available if one looks hard enough. Smaller plants purchased and planted in the spring are more likely to become established in the home garden. Research is being done at Kentucky State University to develop some commercially available varieties. In looking for a nursery to purchase plants I was able to find them at Ty Ty Nursery or Ison's Nursery both of which have catalogs and websites where sizes, prices and shipping information can be found.

References:


Pawpaw information at Kentucky State University - http://www.pawpaw.ksu.edu/


Pictures provided by Will Cook with more available at his website on Pawpaw (Asimina triloba) - http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/trees/astr.html

UPCOMING EVENTS

Blueberry Production & Pruning Demonstration February 11, 2012 - 10am - 12pm @ JC Ag Bldg in Smithfield, NC. Dr. Bill Cline, Blueberry Specialist at NC State University, will share information on growing blueberries in eastern North Carolina. We will then travel a short distance to a blueberry batch and learn how to prune some blueberry bushes to promote the best production. To register: call 919-989-5380

Grape Production & Pruning Demonstration February 25, 2012 - 10am - 12pm, Dr. Sara Spayd, Grape Production Specialist at NC State University, will give a presentation on grape production in North Carolina. We will then have a short pruning demonstration on muscadine grapevines. To register: call 919-989-5380
Location: Gregory Vineyards

Tuesday, February 21 though Tuesday April 24 - Gardening A-Z class. This class will meet every Tuesday evening from 6:30pm until 8:00pm at the Clayton Community Center to discuss spring gardening techniques. There is a demonstration garden at this site that we will use to practice some of the techniques we discuss in class. The class will cost $15 to cover the cost of materials and handouts. To register for the class go to https://secure.rec1.com/NC/clayton-parks-recreation/ and select Nature Programs or call 553-1550 for more information.

Wednesday, February 8 - Gardening for the New to NC: Learn the basics you need to know to garden in North Carolina.

Monday, February 13 - Vegetable Gardening - Square Foot and Container Gardening: Learn varieties, planting times, harvest times and get some hands on experience in these gardening methods.

Wednesday, February 29 - Birds and Feeders for Children - 5-12 years old: Children build a birdfeeder and a birdhouse to take home as well as learn about some plants that will attract birds to the yard.
One of the most feared weeds in the home landscape is crabgrass. It's listed in the title as *Digitaria* species because there are two species of crabgrass that grow in our area. Large crabgrass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*) is a slightly larger plant, with short hairs on the upper and lower surfaces of the leaf blade. Smooth crabgrass (*Digitaria ischaemum*) is slightly smaller, with few to no hairs on the upper surface of the leaf blade. The easiest way for most people to tell the two types of crabgrass apart is to look for the hairs. Both are terribly bothersome to have because as they grow the stems will root where they touch the ground.

Crabgrass is a weed of opportunity. Meaning if it has the opportunity it will spring up and become a problem. All crabgrass needs is a little soil, some moisture, and sunlight and it will begin to grow and spread. Seeds of crabgrass begin to germinate in March when the soil temperature reaches 53 to 58 degrees, and continues to germinate through early May. Both species of crabgrass grow large so quickly they outcompete other grasses and plants for sunlight, water and nutrients.

Prevention is the best method of control. Using proper lawn maintenance techniques including proper mowing height, fertilization, mowing frequency, and deep, infrequent irrigation will encourage a thick, healthy lawn and discourage crabgrass seed germination. In flowerbeds as well as tree and shrub areas a fresh layer of mulch will bury the seed where it won’t receive the needed light for germination.

If crabgrass has been a problem in the past, there is no time like now to begin the battle against this weed. For crabgrass problems in planting beds, apply a thin layer (1 – 2 inches) of mulch. In turf areas start with a pre-emergence herbicide applied mid February to prevent crabgrass seeds from germinating. Pre-emergence herbicides can be purchased at most local garden centers; just ask one of the employees to help you find what you are looking for. Two of the many examples include Crab-Ex by Sta-Green and Halts by Scotts. Unless you are growing fescue or bluegrass there is really no need to use a product that combines pre-emergence herbicide with fertilizer.

Hopefully the pre-emergence herbicides will prevent the crabgrass seeds from germinating. However, in the event some crabgrass does get the chance to germinate, there are some liquid post-emergence products that can be sprayed on the crabgrass to kill it before it can set seeds for next year. Homeowners should look in the **Active Ingredients** section of the label for quinclorac, sulfentrazone or a combination including one or both of these active ingredients. There are other chemicals available for commercial applicators containing other active ingredients.
To protect people, pets, and the environment read and follow the label directions for safety and application methods.

References:


Turf Files: Large Crabgrass - [http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/weeds/Crabgrass_Large.aspx](http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/weeds/Crabgrass_Large.aspx)

Turf Files: Smooth Crabgrass - [http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/weeds/crabgrass_smooth.aspx](http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/weeds/crabgrass_smooth.aspx)

WHAT’S IN SEASON

**Radish**

*Raphanus sativus*

by Shawn Banks

The genus *Raphanus* is derived from the Greek word *raphanos* meaning “easily grown.” One of the easiest of all the vegetables to grow, the radish root can mature in as little as 30 days from the time the seed is planted.

Another random bit of information is that radish gets its common name from the Latin word *radix*, meaning “root”. This too would seem obvious, because it is the root of the plant we eat. Most of us may be familiar with the round red or red and white radish that is popular on salads, but there are several other varieties of radishes as well. For example there are radishes with roots like carrots and several varieties that grow rather large and can be stored during the winter much like beets and turnips.

Radishes need to be planted in a uniform seedbed that is well drained but will stay moist. Seeds should be planted about 2 to 4 inches apart. Using the square foot garden method, a seed spacing of 2 inches will yield 16 plants per square foot. Keep radishes well watered. Plants that become stressed from heat or drought will become hot, tough and pithy. The best quality radishes will be produced when the growing temperatures are between 50 and 65 degrees F.

Seeding can start as early as February 15 and continue every two weeks until May or June and again in the fall beginning August 1 through September 15 for a continuous harvest. Bury the seeds ½ inch deep directly into the seedbed. Keep the soil moist until harvest. The small garden variety radishes may take as little as 28 days to reach maturity.
while the larger storage radishes may take up to 90 days to reach maturity.

**Recipe: Grilled Radishes**

**Ingredients**
- 20 ounces radishes, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons butter, cut into small pieces
- 1 cube ice
- Salt and pepper to taste

**Directions**
1. Preheat the grill to high heat
2. Tightly seal foil around contents.
3. Place foil packet on the grill, and cook 20 minutes, or until radishes are tender.

Reference:

**FEBRUARY GARDEN TASKS**

**Lawn Care**
- Cool season grasses should be fertilized mid-month. If a soil sample has not been taken, use a fertilizer of at least 30% slow release Nitrogen at the rate of 1 pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet.
- Crabgrass usually will start to germinate about the same time the Forsythia blooms. If you have had problems with crabgrass in the past, then you may want to apply crabgrass preventer when the Forsythia blooms.
- Pulling wild onion/wild garlic is the best way to get rid of these pesky bulbs, but make sure you get the bulb. If there are too many to pull, a product with 2,4-D works well.
- To help control this weed. Be sure to follow the manufactures directions found on the label. Complete control may take two or more years. Apply 2,4-D at half the recommended rate on centipede lawns otherwise it will damage the grass.
- For more tips on lawn care visit [Turf Files](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/publications/vegetabletravelers/) on the internet.

**Trees, Shrubs, and Ornamentals**
- Cut back dormant ornamental grasses before new growth starts to about 10 to 14 inches above the soil. Evergreen ornamental grasses (or grass like ornamentals) such as Liriope and Mondo Grass should be cut short or mowed to remove last year’s unsightly foliage. If the clumps have become too big for the area they can be divided and shared with friends or planted in other areas of the yard.
- Summer blooming shrubs bloom on new growth so they can be pruned hard in February to encourage new growth and many flowers. Examples include Abelia, Hibiscus, Hydrangea, Beautyberry, Butterfly bush, Althea, Rose of Sharon, and bush or Tea Roses. [Shrub Pruning Calendar](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/publications/vegetabletravelers/)
- Spring blooming shrubs such as Azaleas, Rhododendrons, Forsythia, Spirea, Quince, Weigela, and Climbing Roses bloom on last years growth and should not be pruned until after they have flowered.
Edibles

- **Deciduous trees** especially those that bloom in the spring should not be pruned this time of the year. Examples being Dogwoods, Red Buds, Maples and several others. For many evergreens this is the best time of the year to prune if they haven't been pruned already. [Evergreen Pruning Calendar](depts/hort/hil/hil-8703.html)

- Summer blooming roses can be pruned this time of the year. Remember not to remove more than 1/3 of the growth. Remove old mulch and leaves from around plants, this removes many overwintering fungal spores. Put down fresh mulch.

- Bare root roses and trees can be planted this time of the year. Soak the roots overnight to rehydrate them before planting.

- Spring flowers such as Sweet Williams, Pansy, Viola, Calendula, Forget-Me-Nots, English Daisies, Poppy, Alyssum and Dianthus can be planted now. Don't forget to deadhead pansies and fertilize toward the end of the month.

Houseplants

- Even houseplants need a little rest once in a while, and this is a good time to give them a rest. Keep them watered but give them a break from the fertilizer as most houseplants don't do much growing during the short days of winter.

- Turn and prune houseplants regularly to keep them shapely. Pinch back new growth to promote busy plants.

- While this may sound extremely silly, your houseplants will thank you for it. When dusting the furniture, also dust the plants. Wipe dust from broad-leaf plants at regular intervals using a cloth dampened with clean water. If the plant has small leaves, consider placing several in the shower to wash the dust off.

- Keep an eye open for pest on indoor plants. Most can be treated with insecticidal soaps.

Insects

- Control overwintering insects such as scale and their eggs by hand picking or using a dormant oil spray (also know as [horticultural oil](depts/hort/hil/hil-8703.html)). Be sure to check for scales before spraying and follow the manufactures directions when applying any pesticide. Do not apply dormant oils to broadleaf evergreens when freezing temperatures are expected.

- Cool-weather mites are not visible to the naked eye. Junipers and other needle evergreens are a favorite hang out these mites. If you had some of these plants that were an unsightly brown last year, check them with a hand held magnifying glass to see if cool season mites are to blame. Horticultural oil or other registered insecticides can improve their situation and appearance.

Edibles

- Asparagus crowns can be planted now through March.
- Transplant cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower out into the garden.
- Strawberry plants can be planted now for spring fruits.
- Beets, carrots, peas, lettuce, mustard, radish, spinach, Irish potatoes, and turnips can be sown outside.
- Starting seeds indoors is easy and economical. Sometimes it is the only way to get the color or variety of the plants you want to grow. It is not necessary to use "grow lights", ordinary florescent tubes will usually be enough. For more information you can read the pamphlet "Starting Plants from Seeds", it is on the web at [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/)