



# ask

*Celebrating 20 Years!*  
**the landscape professional**  
Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

## Welcome to my weekly series!

Email or mail your questions to: [info@sprigsandtwigs.net](mailto:info@sprigsandtwigs.net) or  
Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 06335



Thank you Readers for Voting Sprigs & Twigs  
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**Question this Week:** *How do I prune this rose bush? When is the best time to prune, now or in the Spring? ...Margaret*

### Linda's Answer:

Hi Margaret, There is a two-part process to prune this rose bush.

1) **This Fall:** Prune off all of the dead stems back to the ground. If the stem is dead only half way down, prune only half way down. That's it for now - Most of the pruning will be done in the spring.

2) **Next Spring and after:**

a) When the new growth starts to emerge from the live stems (usually from the middle of April to the middle of May)(Caution-do not cut before you see new growth): Cut back anything that died over the winter. Cut back remaining live stems to about 2ft tall. If there are any new stems growing towards the middle of the shrub, cut them off. There needs to be space within the middle of the shrub to encourage air circulation which, in turn, discourages pests and disease.

b) Fertilize with Rosetone. It's a dry, organic, slow-release fertilizer found anywhere that sells plants. Take a couple of handfuls and work it into soil around the base of the plant without touching the main stem. Water in well. From May through August you will need to fertilize 1x/month. Roses need a lot of fertilizer to produce flowers all through the growing season. Do not fertilize after September 1st because that would encourage new growth which could possibly be killed off by a hard frost in October.

c) Place 2-3" of mulch(no more) around the base of the shrub to smother weeds and keep the soil moist and cool. Do not touch the plant with the mulch.

d) After the first bloom, cut off the dead flowers so the shrub does not produce fruit (rose hip). The energy needed to make a fruit will take away from creating more flowers. While you are cutting off the dead flowers, thin and shape the shrub again making sure the center of the shrub stays open.

e) Keep the rose well-watered throughout the growing season. No Water=No Flowers! One 5 gallon bucket of water each week would be great.

A repeat blooming rose will produce major flowers at least twice a season and will sporadically bloom in between the major blooms if the above protocol is followed. Good Luck!



*Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 20 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, an accredited NOFA Organic Land Care Professional, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation projects..*

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