

February 2017- we are now doing our major winter pruning of the roses and notice that we have quite a bit of borer damage in the canes of many roses. We keep cutting back the cane until we reach nice green wood, but in some cases have to remove the cane completely. Once all the roses are pruned, we will rake up all fallen leaves and then dormant spray all plants to get a jump on possible overwintering funguses and insects.



The weather has been warm enough that quite a few plants are budding out and most probably will all be by the time all the pruning is done, so the dormant spray will be Neem Oil which can be sprayed on budded canes without damage. Once we have full leaf out the roses will get a spring feeding with a nitrogen fertilizer to replenish the nitrogen leached from the soil by the winter rains.

The roses put on an enormous amount of growth last season so they are being heavily pruned and this year we plan to also do a midsummer pruning, especially of the David Austin English roses which are very unruly. That may delay later bloom somewhat, but last season deadheading them midseason was like getting stuck in a jungle. Since roses in our climate go semi-dormant in the heat of the summer anyway, which means there is not much bloom when it is very hot, perhaps it will not slow them down at all.

We are also experimenting with cutting the canes to grow more upright than is normal. Usually roses are pruned so they become vase shaped with the center open, but since they grow so strongly in our great soil, we are trying to keep them growing more closely so we can get in to deadhead and provide more room around each plant. This may produce more funguses since the air circulation will be cut down somewhat so we'll wait and see how well it works. Fortunately roses are very resilient, so if doesn't work well we can try something else next season. Our last resort would be to remove some of the plants to open up the space. When the garden was first planted, the roses were gridded so that each rose had enough space according to the grower, but our roses seem to be growing much bigger.

Eve Keener
SDG Rose Garden Chair