



# Colorado Flower Growers Association

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Cutting and Pruning Methods on Better Times Roses  
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What to do with blind wood is a common question for debate among rose growers. Should it be removed, pinched or left alone? Often in midwinter, some canes are too tall for ease of cutting, disbudding, etc. How is production and quality affected by pruning these canes back as they become too tall?

Some rose growers prefer to establish a cutting level on rose plants and to soft pinch all growths that would flower below this level. Often this cutting level is the upper one-third of the plant. How does this method of handling rose plants influence their production and its quality?

To attempt to answer these questions, four benches of Better Times roses were divided into four plots each, separated by buffer rows, and the following treatments were made in each bench. The treatments were arranged in a latin square so that each treatment was represented in each section of the house. The following methods of cutting and pruning were used:

1. Cutting up during fall and winter leaving two five-leaflet eyes each time a cut was made. Cutting down during the spring as the canes became too tall. Blind wood was removed or pinched.
2. Cutting up during fall and winter and down during the spring. Blind wood was not removed. This was used as the check treatment.
3. Alternate cutting up and down as needed throughout the period.
4. Cutting up during the fall and winter and down during the spring and soft pinching all shoots on the lower two-thirds of the plants at all times.

This experiment was begun in September, 1950, and discontinued April 23, 1951, for a total of approximately eight months. The results of the eight-month period are compiled in the following table. The figures in the table are totals for the four replications of each treatment.

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Quality Distribution

Treat- ment	Works	9 in.	12 in.	15 in.	18 in.	21 in.	24 in.+
1	166	200	457	297	90	24	6
2	138	225	445	327	107	29	1
3	148	231	419	291	99	20	3
4	101	163	407	302	155	26	2

Average Quality and Production

Treat- ment	Ave. Stem Length (in.)	% Works	Total Production	Production Per Square Foot
1	13.04	13.39	1240	19.38
2	13.08**	10.85	1272***	19.88
3	12.93	12.22	1211	18.92
4	13.52*	8.74	1156	18.06

\* Treatment 4 produced significantly longer stems than all others.

\*\* Treatment 2 produced significantly longer stems than treatment 3.

\*\*\* Treatment 2 produced significantly more flowers than treatments 3 and 4.

From the data above, several points are indicated for Better Times roses under Colorado conditions:

1. The removal of, or pinching of, blind wood is neither beneficial nor detrimental to quality and production. Removing or pinching blind wood is a wasted operation.

2. Pruning during the midwinter is detrimental to both quality and production.

3. Soft pinching all canes on the lower two-thirds of plants at all times increases the quality and decreases total production. Records over a longer period than eight months would have emphasized quality to an even greater degree.