Celebrate Valentine’s Day by working in the garden! February 14th is the
traditional time to prune roses in Central Texas. All roses, with the exception of
climbing varieties can be pruned in mid February. Climbing roses are pruned
after they bloom.

Start by cleaning your pruning equipment with alcohol or a 10% chlorine solution.
This will help to prevent the spread of disease. Remove dead canes and any
branches that are rubbing or crossing over each other. Then stand back and
assess the plant structure to see other areas that might need attention. Reshape
the rose by removing only 1/3 of the plant material. Remove all pruning debris
from the area when finished.

After your plant is shaped, add compost and then apply 3-4 inches of hardwood
mulch. The mulch will prevent temperature extremes, conserve moisture and aid
in weed control. What about fertilizer? Roses designated as EarthKind do not
need fertilizers. Plant nourishment is provided from the soil microbes in the
compost and the decomposing hardwood mulch.

EarthKind roses do not require fertilizers or the chemical sprays.
These roses have been tested for years before they are given the
EarthKind distinction. While the Knock Out varieties do not have the fragrance
that some of the older varieties have, they make up for it in their almost constant
blooming. EarthKind roses with fragrance are Belinda’s Dream, Carefree
Beauty, Perle d’ Or, Spice, La Marne, Georgetown Tea, Reve d’ Or, Mme
Antoine Mari.

Master gardeners will have 24 varieties of roses that are designated as
EarthKind at their spring plant sale March 26th. Rose varieties at the plant sale
will include Knock Out, Shrub, Polyantha, Bourbon, Noisette, and China. The
master gardener spring plant sale will be held in the greenhouse at the AgriLife
Extension, 1605 North Main, Belton, on March 26, (7:30AM to 1PM). Herbs,
vegetables, perennials and trees will also be available at the plant sale.

Have any questions about gardening in Central Texas? Contact
ask bcmga@gmail.com

In the photo: Prune your roses in February and have beautiful blooms this spring.
Select roses designated as EarthKind varieties and you can forget about a
fertilizing and disease-spraying schedule.