
THE HIDDEN LIFE OF ROSES

The Handouts

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Quick Reference Guide

What Each Hormone Does

- **Auxin:** Top-down control. Remove branch tip for more branching.
- **Cytokinin:** Root-up growth encouragement. Keep roots hydrated.
- **Gibberellins:** Stretching. Too much N results in long floppy canes.
- **Ethylene:** Stress leads to leaf drop, blind shoots, bud deaths

Fixing Common Problems

- **Blind shoots:** Water deeply; light feed; remove tip.
- **Suckers:** Remove at origin; protect graft union.
- **Stalling:** Don't push top growth—focus on roots.
- **Heat stress:** Water before heat; mulch; shade new roses.

What your rose is telling you

Symptom	Physiological Cause	Your Fix
Blind shoots	Ethylene spike	Deep water + remove tip
Tall, floppy canes	Gibberellin surge	Reduce nitrogen
Few blooms	Apical dominance	Deadhead deeper
Suckering	Rootstock dominance	Remove at base
Yellow leaves after heat	Ethylene stress	Water before heat
“Stalling”	Prioritizing roots	Light shaping only

Seasonal Care Calendar

Late Winter (Jan–Feb)

- Structural pruning – prune once
- Remove thin canes
- Clean up diseased areas
- Mulch to protect graft union → reduces suckering

Spring (Mar–May)

- Water deeply as growth begins
- Light feeding monthly
- Prune out winter dieback
- Watch for blind shoots after cold snaps

Summer (Jun–Aug)

- Water deeply before heatwaves
- Deadhead to reset auxin balance
- Light feeding monthly
- Shade cloth for new roses

Fall (Sep–Nov)

- Reduce feeding
- Let last bloom cycle finish
- Avoid heavy pruning (ethylene spike risk)
 - Root growth surge—keep soil moisture stable