

How to Prune Desert Roses

If you'd like your desert roses to grow more branches and bloom more flowers, then pruning or trimming the existing branches down can give you very good results.

Although pruning can help, doing so might lead to root rot if we're not careful. Let's grab some gears & do some chop chop.

Come on along, let us show you how.

Pruning Desert Roses: 3 Simple Tips

1. Leave About 2-3 Inches of Branch When Cutting

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(12\)/leave-about-three-inches-on-adenium-branch.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(12)/leave-about-three-inches-on-adenium-branch.jpg)

When you cut the branches down, make sure to leave about 2-3 inches of stem on the plant. If you're unsure, this may just be about a finger's length. Kind of like the baby in our garden right above (it was not a very clean cut but anyhow).

The first reason why we leave this amount of length is for aesthetics. When we cut the branches down too low, it might make our plants look not well-balanced or just plain ugly.

The second reason why we do this is to allow enough space for the new branches to grow out. We want good enough support for the young branches to lean on.

But when you chop it down, remember to:

2. Cut at a Slanted Angle

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(12\)/cut-branch-at-slanted-angle.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(12)/cut-branch-at-slanted-angle.jpg)

When pruning, it's good to cut your branches at a slanted angle and not a straight line. It's like this "/" or like this "\". But not like this "-".

With a slanted angle like this, any raindrops or water droplets that fall onto our cuts will be able to drop down more easily and not concentrated on or soak into them.

Doing this significantly reduces the risk of our cuts being infected with the acid or just rainwater in many places.

To help with cutting, these pairs of shears can help:

Durable Pruning Shears

<https://amzn.to/2XtAIO7>

3. Choose the Part to Chop Off

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(12\)/little-eyes-on-adenium-branch.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(12)/little-eyes-on-adenium-branch.jpg)

Choosing the part to cut off depends on your eye for beauty. On the branches of a desert rose, there will be small eye-like parts. Here, we'll just call them eyes for simplicity. From those eyes, new branches will shoot out.

To choose the best part, look at your branches first. Then, see how many eyes a certain portion of the branch has or which direction the eyes are facing. Is it facing inward or outward. You then cut at that point you desire to make the whole shape of your plant nice and balanced.

Also, remember, although we said to leave about 2-3 inches of branch, we don't want to cut the branches too high on the upper part either. Because this part is tender and high-up, it may be more difficult for the water and nutrients to reach the top and promote new growth. It's probably not going to do much for your tree.

What you want to do is to look for the gray and green part on the branch. The gray part is like the bark of the tree and the green part is where you can see the branches start to get slimmer and tender. You can see it right here:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(12\)/green-gray-part-desert-rose-branch.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(12)/green-gray-part-desert-rose-branch.jpg)

Cut somewhere around the point where the two parts meet or lower. This way, you will have a strong base for the new branches to grow and make sure your plants supply enough nutrients to shoot out the new sprouts.

Choose long, single branches to chop down. We are trying to multiply the number of branches. So we can start from single branches to increase the number of stems on the tree.

What To Do & What Not To Do After Pruning Desert Roses

After pruning your desert roses, just don't water them yet. After pruning, your babies' caudex is now very weak and don't want to drink any more liquid. So, no water after this point.

You can apply some powder or glue to protect the new cuts from rainwater or fungi. Here is a list of some cheap, readily available materials:

- Garden lime powder
- [Cinnamon ground](#)
- Scar glue
- Super glue
- [Wood glue](#) (Titebond 3 works best for the job)
- Nail polish

Powder can be applied immediately after pruning as it creates a breathable surface for the cuts. If you apply the glue immediately after pruning, moisture can't escape out especially in high humidity regions

and the stem may rot. So for the glue, wait until it's more dry or for at least 2 weeks (the point at which new leaves are sprouting out), then apply the glue.

Here's some good garden lime if you're interested.

Good Garden Lime

<https://amzn.to/2XfUIpr>

People also apply garden lime powder on the new scars to help protect against infection. Because the lime powder has properties to fight against bacteria.

When you put lime on the open wound, the lime and sap mix up to create some yellow stuff like this:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(12\)/lime-poweder-adenium-sap.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(12)/lime-poweder-adenium-sap.jpg)

In other places, gardeners also use cinnamon powder to cover up the new wounds. It's the same cinnamon ground we use for cooking.

The powder can help protect the cuts from rainwater while keeping the inside of the branch moist and alive. And oh, it smells nice!

You can also put some glue on the branches for them to heal. They have some special scar glue for this job.

But if you don't find any in your local area, super glue or waterproof wood glue is also fine. Another thing you can use is the clear nail polish. That works to heal up the wound and keep it dry as well.

As a note, the top part where we put glue on won't grow up or taller anymore. The plant will divide its way to the side, growing out side branches (thanks to Ms Hang Le for explaining to me this). So we don't have to worry about the glue blocking any nutrient pathways. The smart plants won't go the blocked road.

When to Prune Desert Roses

Generally, you don't want to prune your desert roses during the rainy season. If you're not careful, the rain may damage the new cuts and lead to rots or infections. During monsoon, the plants need somewhere to let the water out and not take in more.

Trimming down the water outlets—the flowers, the leaves—in this case, won't help. It also makes the water-processing ability of the caudex weaker and makes the roots more susceptible to infections. So *wait until rainy season is over and then we can start pruning your desert roses.*

You can plan the pruning when there will be some sunny days ahead for the cuts to dry. Depending on where you live, try trimming in spring, February or April. For young plants, clip some small leaves when they are about a few weeks old. After about six months, prune them again to promote new branch growth.

Also keep in mind the growing stages & cycle of your adenium:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(12\)/adenium-life-cycle.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(12)/adenium-life-cycle.jpg)

For example, if the plant is about to go to its peak point (near flowering) and we prune it, it may go back to square one & need some time again to spin up a new growth cycle starting from leaf creation then flowering.

People often do the pruning after the plants have flowered. This gives them a little bit of a push to enter a new growth phase after a good resting period.

As branches start to grow out, in spring for example, people don't prune them & just let the plant extend its reach.

When to prune desert roses in Florida

For folks who live in sunny areas like Florida where there is not really a cold winter season (70-80F or 21-26C), you can start pruning around October, November and let the plants rest over the winter. After about three months, it may begin blooming again, catching the very first sunlight of the new spring.

If you live in the Northern part where temperatures are around 40-50F (4-10C) during the winter, then just leave your plants alone. In case you're wondering, here are the [best winter care tips for your desert roses](#).

Also, keep the plants inside to protect them from being frozen. Two months before spring, you can start trimming them down. When temperatures rise above 50F (10C), you can take the plants outside.

When timing the trimming, keep in mind the upcoming period and how it affects your plants. For example, if we do it in early spring, we will then have 5-6 months of sunny, dry & no-rain season ahead of us. And that's good for the plants to recover and grow back strong again. Take note of the weather pattern in your local area and decide the best time accordingly.

What to Do Before Trimming Desert Roses

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(12\)/adenium-plant-before-pruning.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(12)/adenium-plant-before-pruning.jpg)

Before giving your desert roses a hair cut, you can first cut the water intake some days before that. Some growers cut the water 3-4 days prior to trimming. Others stop watering 5-12 days before the trim. This depends on your plants and their current conditions. The reason we cut the water is to prevent root rot.

Because when we prune down the branches, the ability to transport and process water and nutrients of the caudex and roots will be weaker than usual. As it's now weakened, it cannot take in too much water anymore. With a lot of unprocessed water and nutrients inside, root rots can happen. Thus we cut the water to prevent this from happening.

While extra water is good news for all the bacteria and fungi on the roots, it's not good news for our desert roses. So remember to cut down on the water amount days before trimming your babies.

Even if root rot happens, don't worry, you can save your plants with these simple tips:

>> Link Blog post: [Adenium desert rose root rot how to save](#)

When Will Your Desert Roses Bloom Again After Pruning?

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(12\)/red-adenium-flower.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(12)/red-adenium-flower.jpg)

The exact answer to this question depends on your specific adenium variety, the sun, the wind, the way you feed the plants and so on.

However, according to many gardeners' experience, you can expect this timeline for single and double layer desert roses:

Type of desert roses	From prune to bloom
Single petal layer	60-95 days
Double petal layer	75-90 days

Again, we need to emphasize that the timeline varies depending on a lot of factors. Usually, single petal adenium will take a shorter amount of time from prune to bloom than the double petal ones.

For some single petal adenium, it only takes 60-65 days after pruning for them to begin flowering. Some take around 70-75 days and some "picky" babies can take up to 90-95 days.

Double petals may need around 75-80 days for recovery and regrowth. Some about 80-85 days. And some stubborn ones can take over 90 days. This timeline outlines what to expect after you do the pruning.

Choose the Species for Pruning

Pruning twigs works well for *Adenium Broccoli* or a hybrid between Somalense x Obesum. Microbroccoliand & Arabicum don't seem to re-act too well with branch pruning.

Branch pruning:

Good	Not very good
Adenium Broccoli	Adenium Microbroccoliand
Adenium Somalense x Obesum	Adenium Arabicum

Pruning roots works well for *Adenium Arabicum* though. We can get quite a good re-action.

Your Turn At Trimming Desert Roses

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(12\)/now-its-your-turn.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(12)/now-its-your-turn.jpg)

The pruning process for every desert rose plant on this planet is unique as your plant is. It's a long, on-going process that you can closely watch and take note of along the way. This way, you'll better know the cycle of your plants.

Prune your adenium when rainy season is over. Before pruning, cut off the water intake for about 7 days or more. When you prune, choose long, single branches, cut them at a slanted angle around the gray-green part, and cover the cuts with garden lime powder, glue or cinnamon.

If you use glue, wait for at least 2 weeks. Otherwise, it might cause moisture retention and hence rotting. If you use a powder form like cinnamon, you can apply it immediately because powder is breathable.

We almost forgot but it's good to make the cutting tools clean before doing the surgery, too! There's so much more to explore about this process. We'll be coming back with more content for you. Stay tuned & see you here again next time.

Thanks:

- [Maria's Garden - Oh my ! It's prune time](#)