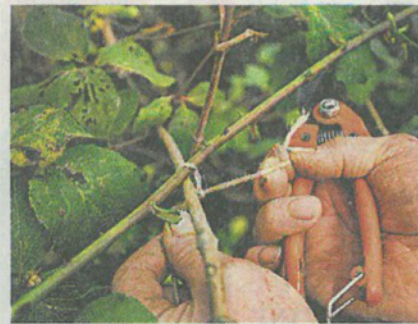


MARK EDWARDS'S PRUNING REGIME

Roses at Asthall are pruned, one at a time, between late September and early March. Those on the walls are tackled first and then the borders. Any with bird-sustaining hips are left until last.

1 The first step is to clip away all the leaves, so you're left with the stems. Some of the older growth is also removed at this stage. Taking off the leaves helps



to keep roses disease-free, because most rose diseases overwinter on foliage. As a result Asthall's roses are never sprayed. Mulching and

feeding with blood, fish and bone and garden compost also helps to keep plants strong.

2 The new growth, which is shiny to look

at, is tied in with garden twine. A ball is kept in the pocket and carefully teased out bit by bit. The job has to be done without gloves, whatever the weather, so knots can be tied.

3 On the walls, pliable stems are bent into circles and ovals, although there are exceptions, such as 'Guinée'. The idea is to slow down the flow of sap so that more flower buds are produced.

4 In the borders, new growth is often pulled through adjacent shrubs and wound around a shrub, or bent downwards, again to slow the flow of sap. Hydrangeas, philadelphus and viburnums are shrubby favourites here.

5 After pruning, the roses are fed organically with lots of bonemeal and a good mulch of home-made garden compost.