

# Rose Information

## ***Spines, Prickles and Pokeys***

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Do you know that roses do not have thorns? Thorns are modified branches, woody and with their own vascular system. Thorns can be found on English hawthorn and *Pyracantha*. Prickles are non-woody outgrowths of the surface that are not in direct contact with the plant's conducting tissues (vascular system). Examples are the prickles of rose bushes and blackberries, which snap off cleanly when pushed. Spines are modified leaves, where the blade is underdeveloped and the leaf stalks, or stipules, are stiff, woody and pointed. So, roses have prickles and cacti have spines. Many children have already come up with a solution that avoids the confusion. They simply say that a pointy thing on a plant that causes an 'ouchie' when touched is a 'pokey.' Sounds good to me.