

Proper Pruning



Proper pruning will help you keep your landscape trees and shrubs healthy and within desired size limits. Pruning modifies the growth of a plant for three purposes: to train and redirect growth, to maintain health by removing dead or diseased wood, and to increase the quality or quantity of flowers or fruit.

When To Prune

Most plants should be pruned during the dormant season, which is late winter and early spring, before the new growth appears. Exceptions to this include ornamental plants that bloom in spring on buds developed from the previous season, which should be pruned after they finish blooming.

Prune In Early Spring While Still Dormant

Butterfly Bush	Sourwood
Hydrangea	Oxydendron
Spirea japonica	Dogwood
Sweet Shrub	Red Bud
Oregon Grape Holly	Maples

Prune Immediately After Blooming

Deutzia	Lilac
Forsythia	Daphne
Beauty Bush	Rhododendron
Mock Orange	Azaleas
Spirea	Kerria
Weigela	Andromeda

Tree Pruning

The first thing to look for when pruning a tree is broken, diseased or dead branches, all of which should be removed. The next thing to be concerned with are suckers and water sprouts. Suckers can be either bottom suckers coming from the root system or growths originating from the trunk. Another problem growth is called a water sprout which is very noticeable because it grows straight up from a branch. These growths rob water and nutrients from the tree. They are primarily problems for flowering trees, and should be removed. After these problems have been corrected, now is the time to consider the shape of the tree. If it is required to make your tree safer or more attractive, the removal of large limbs may be needed. This is perhaps the most difficult part of tree pruning. It requires two cuts - one cut controls the weight of the limb and prevents tearing of the bark. This is a V-shaped cut done below the limb. The second cut is made closer to the trunk and removes the limb, but should be no closer than the branch collar.

Pruning Deciduous Shrubs

Most deciduous shrubs benefit from annual pruning. Pruning not only controls the size of these shrubs, but it may also increase flower production and encourage colorful bark. By selectively pruning these shrubs, we can increase their value to us and our landscapes. Let's begin with a few of the more common shrubs, such as lilac, forsythia, and weigela. These shrubs are most commonly known for their flowers; with this in mind, we should prune them just after they bloom. Remove older growth and "dead heads" to encourage new growth which will give us more flowers. Plants such as red and yellow twig dogwood have colorful stems which can be enhanced by removing the older gray stems. There are many other trees and shrubs that require more detailed pruning recommendations. Ask our knowledgeable staff for more information.

