



Pruning Basics

Tools:

- ◇ Hand Pruners: By-Pass style preferred over anvil type, usually can cut up to 1/2" -1" branches
- ◇ Loppers: By-Pass -style preferred, cuts 1 -2" branches
- ◇ Hand Saws w/ Tri-edge blade: Some models can cut up to 4" branches
- ◇ Pole Pruners: Most extend for 10'+ some also include a small saw

Plant Placement:

Proper site placement of shrubs and trees is one of the most important factors of landscape design that impacts how frequently a plant will require pruning... Give them room to grow.

Fertilization:

Slow release or controlled release products give plants small amounts of nutrients over a specific period of time resulting in even growth and color thru the season vs. quick flushes. Ex. Plant Tone Organic Fertilizer, Osmocote etc.

Mature plants with good color may not require fertilizer.

Why do we prune?

- ◇ Control Size
- ◇ Shape
- ◇ Remove dead / damaged parts
- ◇ Remove crossing limbs/structural cuts

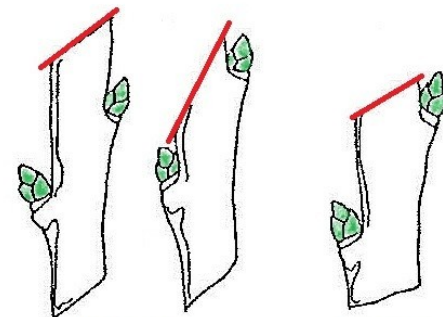
Situations that influence how we prune

- ◇ Location — under windows, along Walks, near signage
- ◇ Design Intent — layered look, screen, individuals vs. masses?

Look for the following characteristics to determine if a limb should be pruned:

- ◇ Dead Limbs-Easiest to detect during growing season when leaves are present-or should be.

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INCORRECT

CORRECT

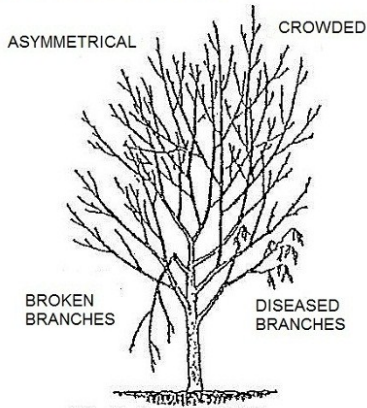


Pruning Basics

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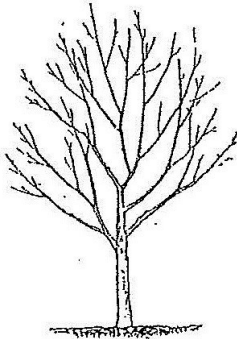
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PRUNING A TREE: BEFORE



- ◇ Diseased or Insect Damaged-These need to be removed at least 1' past the point of infection, or to the proper length for the shape of the tree, whichever is greater.
- ◇ In the Way-Limbs touching the house or that causes you to duck to mow under.
- ◇ Limbs that Cross-These are limbs that rub against each other. Choose the strongest and best located one for the overall shape of the tree.
- ◇ Prune to the natural shape of the tree-forcing it into an unnatural shape (or size) means more pruning!
- ◇ Never top any tree for any reason. It is unsafe and unsightly.
- ◇ Trees can be pruned almost any time except during spring bud break or leaf expansion. Prune flowering trees 2-3 weeks after blooming to prevent cutting off next year's flowers.
- ◇ Trees that "bleed" can still be cut the same time as other trees can; the bleeding is more unsightly than damaging. To lessen sap flow, prune trees prone to bleeding when dormant (Jan.-Feb.)

PRUNING A TREE: AFTER



Renovation of Older Plants

Reserve this task for late winter or early spring to minimize the length of time the plant is thin due to heavy pruning

Thin out up to 1/3 of existing limbs to allow light into center of the plant to promote new growth on the interior branches. Allow at least 1 year for the interior foliage to form before reducing size of remaining outer limbs.

OR

Make severe size reduction all at once, this works well on many large-leaf hollies, azaleas, ligustrum.

Pruning plants that consist of Canes

(Mahonias, Nandina, Forsythia, Aucuba, etc.)

Thin out oldest, woodiest canes, up to 1/3 of total canes yearly to encourage new basal growth.

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Pruning Basics cont.

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Pruning Ornamental Grasses

(Miscanthus, Fountain Grass, Liriope, etc.)

Prune back prior to spring growth, or when plants no longer have “winter interest”. Cut plants 2-3” above ground level.

Time-saving tip: With a length of rope, tie up grasses 1’-2’ above ground level. This enables grass to be cut more easily by pulling the stems tightly together. Once cut, all the stems are bundled for easy disposal.

Pruning Spring Flowering Shrubs

(Azaleas, Forsythia, Rhododendron, etc.)

These plants bloom on last year’s wood and set flower buds 1-2 months after blooming. To avoid pruning off next year’s flowers prune as soon as possible after blooms fade.

Pruning Summer Flowering Shrubs

(Buddleia, Crape Myrtle, Vitex, etc.)

These plants bloom on new growth-prune immediately after flowering or before growth begins in spring.

Pruning Crape Myrtle

Remove twiggy branches smaller than a little finger back to the connecting branch. Head back twiggy tips to the point they are a little-finger in diameter. Remove crossing branches from the interior. Do **not** head them to the main trunk. It is a common, but incorrect pruning method for Crape Myrtles.



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