

Pruning

There are sufficient breaks in the blustery days of late winter and early spring in which pruning can be done in reasonable comfort. It is the proper time of year to prune many plants. Don't go out and cut just because you happened to see your neighbor dragging limbs around his yard. Pruning should be done with a purpose in mind.

We prune for the following reasons:

1. **To maintain or reduce the size of a tree or shrub.** This is an attempt to keep our landscape plantings in proper scale.
2. **To remove dead, diseased and/or broken branches.** This type of pruning should be done at any time of the year unhealthy branches are noticed.
3. **To rejuvenate old shrubs and restore them to new vigor.** Certain shrubs, even though badly overgrown, can be restored to a young, natural growth habit by the proper use of rejuvenation pruning. Lilac, privet, forsythia and many of the spireas are examples of shrubs that can be rejuvenated.
4. **To prevent damage to life and property.** Limbs that are too low over sidewalks or weak limbs over houses or parking areas should be removed.
5. **To shape plants in an unnatural form.** Espaliers, hedges and shrubs used in formal plantings are pruned or sheared in shapes other than their natural growth habit.
6. **To stimulate future flower and fruit development.** Many flowering plants such as rhododendrons and azaleas will produce more flowers if old flowers and fruit clusters are removed.

To retain maximum color on colored twig plants.

The following list of summer flowering trees, shrubs and vines should be pruned in March before spring growth starts	
Scientific name	Common Name
<i>Acanthopanax</i>	Aralia
<i>Abelia grandiflora</i>	Glossy Abelia
<i>Albizia</i>	Silk Tree
<i>Buddleia</i>	Butterflybush
<i>Callicarpa</i>	Beautyberry
<i>Clematis</i>	Clematis
<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>	Shrub-althea
<i>Hydrangea paniculata</i> 'Grandiflora'	P.G. Hydrangea
<i>Hydrangea quercifolia</i>	Oakleaf Hydrangea
<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>	Goldenrain Tree
<i>Rosa</i>	Hybrid Tea

The following list of plants may be pruned both before and after bloom	
Scientific name	Common Name
<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	Red Osier dogwood
<i>Cotoneaster apiculata</i>	Cranberry cotoneaster
<i>Cotoneaster divaricata</i>	Spreading cotoneaster
<i>Cotoneaster multiflora</i>	Multiflora cotoneaster
<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	Oregon hollygrape
<i>Spiraea bumalda</i>	Anthony Waterer and Froebel spirea
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Snowberry
<i>Symphoricarpos chenaultii</i>	Chenault coralberry
<i>Weigela florida</i>	Rose Weigela

The following list of plants should normally be pruned <i>immediately AFTER</i> flowering	
Amelanchier	Shadblow
<i>Azalea</i>	Azalea
<i>Berberis</i>	Barberry
<i>Calycanthus</i>	Sweetshrub
<i>Caragana</i>	Peashrub
<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>	Bittersweet
<i>Chaenomeles</i>	Flowering quince
<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>	Smoketree
<i>Cornus florida</i>	Flowering dogwood
<i>Cornus kousa</i>	Kousa dogwood
<i>Cornus mas</i>	Cornelian cherry
<i>Crataegus</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Deutzia</i>	Deutzia
<i>Forsythia</i>	Forsythia
<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	Mountain laurel
<i>Kolkwitzia amabilis</i>	Beautybush
<i>Ligustrum</i>	Privet
<i>Lonicera</i>	Honeysuckle
<i>Magnolia</i>	Magnolia
<i>Malus</i>	Crabapple
<i>Philadelphus</i>	Mock orange
<i>Pieris</i>	Andromeda
<i>Pyracantha</i>	Firethorn
<i>Prunus</i>	Flowering cherry and plum
<i>Rhododendron</i>	Rhododendron
<i>Rhodotypos scandens</i>	Black jetbead
<i>Rosa</i>	Climbers and shrub roses
<i>Sorbus</i>	Mountain ash
<i>Spiraea thunbergii</i>	Thunberg spirea
<i>Spiraea vanhouttei</i>	Vanhoutte spirea
<i>Styrax japonica</i>	Japanese snowball
<i>Syringa</i>	Common, Chinese, and French lilacs
<i>Viburnum burkwoodii</i>	Burkwood viburnum
<i>Viburnum carlesii</i>	Korean spice viburnum
<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Wayfaring tree
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	European cranberry bush
<i>Viburnum plicatum</i>	Doublefile viburnum

The following plants may be completely cut back to the ground and will rapidly return to usefulness	
Buddleia davidii	Orange-eye butterflybush
<i>Forsythia</i>	Forsythia
<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>	Shrub-althea
<i>Hydrangea arborescens grandiflora</i>	Hill-of-Snow
<i>Hydrangea quercifolia</i>	Oakleaf hydrangea
<i>Lonicera</i>	Honeysuckle
<i>Polygonum aubertei</i>	Silver fleece vine
<i>Spiraea</i>	Spiraea
<i>Syringa</i>	Lilac

These above lists, courtesy of Purdue University, can be used as guides on timing, and also can give you an idea of a few plants that will respond well to extreme pruning when and if it becomes necessary.

Certain trees, notably maple, birch, dogwood, elm, walnut and yellow wood are well-known as bleeding trees. If pruned in early spring, they may bleed profusely. This has little, if any adverse effect on the trees but may cause concern. This can be prevented by waiting until the plants are well into leaf before pruning.

Do not do any pruning (except for the removing of dead or broken limbs) in late summer (August to mid-September).

Tree Pruning. Always leave the high work to professionals who are properly equipped so that they can do the job safely. Make certain that all arborists who do tree work for you are properly insured.

You can cut lower branches and do other pruning on young trees. Remember that rapid healing of a wound occurs when cuts are made nearly flush with the adjoining branch. When stubs are left, healing is prevented, and the stubs die back leaving entry for disease and rot organisms.

Pruning

Remove dead, broken and disease infested branches, branches with weak, acute angled crotches, and rubbing branches. Prune young trees to try to develop well-spaced scaffold branches. Large wounds should be shaped to a vertical ellipse (pointed at top and bottom). This can be done with a knife or chisel. Large wounds can be painted with a tree wound dressing.

As a general rule, do not prune out the central leader.

Trimming the top of flowering trees will eventually increase flowering.

Flowering shrubs. Do not give them a crew cut. Thin out by cutting older branches back to the ground. Prune annually to eliminate the need for drastic pruning. On shrubs with colored twigs, such as red and yellow twig dogwood, about one-third of the older wood should be removed every year to retain maximum coloration.

Narrowleaf evergreens. Yews are the only ones that will respond well to a hard cutback. However, the plants may be unsightly for up to three years.

Pines are pruned by pinching off part of the candle (new growth) when it is about two inches long.

Try to use hand shears to get a feathery, informal appearance on plants such as junipers.

