

PRUNING

Benefits

Removes weakness in structure and dean out diseased plant parts

Controls size or shape. Pruning into hedges or symmetrical shapes can create a more formal look.

Renews or rejuvenates the plant.

Increases flowering or fruiting.

What to Remove

Dead or broken branches.

Diseased branches to the point of healthy wood.

Crossing branches, weak crotches or suckers.

Techniques

Make cuts on a slight slant, 1/4" above the bud.

Cut back to an outside bud so the branch that grows out of it will grow outwards and not into the center of the plant.

Tools should be sharp to make a clean cut. Dip pruning tools in alcohol to clean them after pruning diseased wood. Dip after each cut to avoid spreading the disease.

Larger wounds may be sealed with pruning paint such as Fertilome *Pruning Paint* or Fertilome *Pruning Sealer*.

Use 3 cuts on limb removal to prevent cracking down the trunk. See illustration.

Tips by Plant Type

Evergreens

Prune only to make bushes more compact or to do corrective pruning. Avoid shearing, which is removing all the growth to the same length whether or not it is at a branching point. Keep natural shape by cutting "back in" to an existing smaller side branch. Can be pruned at any time, but usually in early June. Do not prune during the heat of the summer. On pines, cut back candle growth (the new growth which shoots up) while it is still soft.

Deciduous Shrubs (multi-stemmed)

Renewal - Cut back to the ground up to 1/3 of the largest, oldest stems each year. On flowering shrubs, do this after flowering. On others, do this in early spring.

Rejuvenation - If a plant is overgrown and out of control, cut back all of the stems to 4-6 inches in February or March.

Ornamental Trees

Remove any large undesirable limbs and broken or dead branches.

Remove crossing branches and weak crotches.

Tree may be headed back by cutting back to smaller side branches to reduce the overall height and spread.

Remember to always maintain the central leader. The leader should always be at least a foot taller than the side branches. If you cut the leader, you must also cut the side branches.

Prune in the early spring before the leaves start to emerge. This is the easiest time to see the structure.