

PRUNING ORNAMENTALS

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Pruning is not difficult. All you have to do is step up to a plant and cut off a branch. The first 50 cuts will be made with reluctance and doubt. After that, confidence will come quickly and you soon will feel a definite pride in your work.

Don't try to change a plant's natural growth habits. If it is upright or if it is weeping, recognize these traits as natural. Corrective pruning is more ef-

fective if you don't oppose nature.

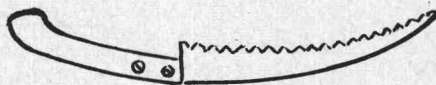
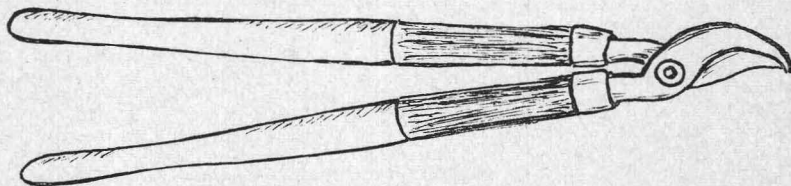
Since the fine points of pruning are of little value, only a few simple directions will be given. This information, plus your own judgment, will enable you to do a satisfactory job.

Just remember, you can't prune without doing some cutting; therefore, step up and cut. Don't worry too much. A wrong cut soon will be concealed by new growth.

Tools

Before you can prune you must have tools. Since there is no substitute for pruning shears, you may need to buy a pair. Get a light, inexpensive pair with 20-inch handles. Long handles en-

able you to prune thorny plants without getting scratched. Hand shears do not have that advantage, and with them you can make only small cuts on the shrubbery.



Essential pruning tools

This bulletin was prepared by Cliff Cordy, Jackson County Extension Agent, Oregon State College. Extension and resident staff at the College reviewed the manuscript and made valuable suggestions.

A carpenter's saw can be used to make occasional cuts, but if many large cuts are to be made, buy a pruning saw.

A poor ladder is the shortest route to the hospital. If you need a ladder, buy a good one. With care it will last many years. Get a regular orchard lad-

der, as the ordinary ladder with four legs is too difficult to set squarely on uneven ground. Treat the ladder with a combination water repellent and wood preservative to avoid splinters and weathering. These compounds are available at lumber companies.

Basic Facts

Pruning stimulates

The most noticeable response from pruning is a marked increase in the amount of new growth produced. New growth may come all over the plant, but several vigorous shoots usually will be produced just below the cut, where stimulation is greatest.

Along with this increase in growth comes two opposite responses in amount of bloom. Dormant pruning reduces the amount of bloom on all plants, but the increased vigor results in better quality and size of flowers. Spring and early summer pruning increases the amount of bloom the following year on most spring flowering shrubs.

Pruning is dwarfing

In spite of the fact that pruning stimulates new growth, it is actually a dwarfing process. Pruning not only reduces the size of the top but causes a corresponding reduction of root system. The grape vine is an outstanding example of dwarfing by pruning. A pruned vine remains only a stump, while one not pruned will climb over buildings, up trees, and eventually cover a large area.

You can put this dwarfing effect to good use. A tree or bush that is out of balance can be made uniform by pruning the heavy side and letting the weak side grow. Also, evergreens planted by

a door or under a window can be kept small by constant pruning. This kind of planting is not recommended, however. It is better to plant slower growing material.

Dormant pruning

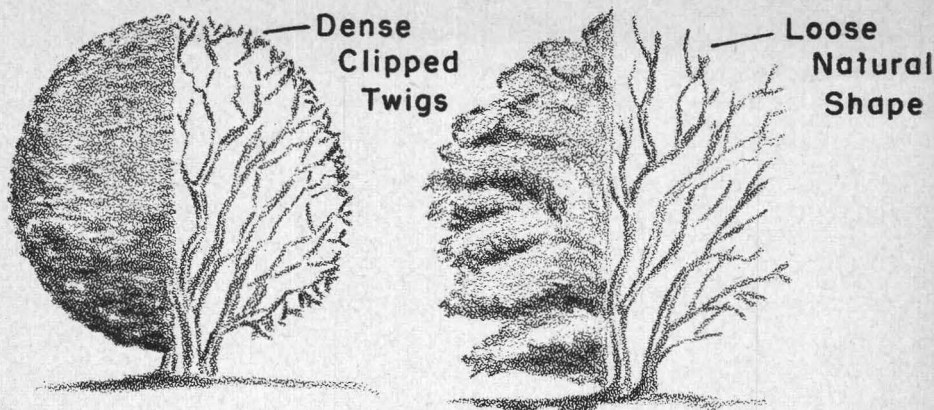
Shrubs that bloom during middle and late summer should be pruned during the dormant season. In mild climates prune any time after start of leaf drop in the fall and before new leaves appear in the spring. Where winters are severe prune in February and March, as severe winter cold may kill some growth and cause some die-back around pruning wounds.

Spring pruning

Any dormant pruning of spring flowering shrubs will result in a reduction in the amount of bloom. As spring bloom comes before new growth is made, dormant pruning will not influence bloom quality. Therefore, prune early flowering shrubs and trees, such as forsythia, flowering plum and peach, and flowering quince, during or immediately following the blooming period.

Summer pruning

Summer pruning should be restricted to trimming hedges, shaping evergreen ornamentals, or other practices where dwarfing and shaping are important. Summer pruning is more dwarfing



Shearing vs. Thinning

than dormant pruning so is an important means of balancing up a plant and of restraining increase in size. Pinching back new shoots also tends to increase the amount of bloom on such shy producers as wisteria.

Ornamental espaliers

The training of ornamental shrubs and trees as a fence or against a fence, wall, or building is suited to present day gardening. Dwarf fruit trees, cotoneaster, pyracantha, and many others can be used for this purpose.

Pruning and training to produce

spaced laterals is desirable. Staking and tying is necessary as you start with the young plants or trees. Excess laterals frequently are tipped during the growing season. These produce flowering and fruiting spurs.

Shearing vs. thinning

Keep growth loose except where formal results are desired. By removing older wood, legginess is prevented and new growths from the base keep the plant young. Cut the old ones a few inches above ground. New shoots will generally come from the stub.

Butterfly Bush

Butterfly Bush, a form of *Buddleia*, is also known as a summer lilac. It is a vigorous grower and produces a great profusion of lilac-like flowers. These flowers are produced in midsummer on the terminals of vigorous shoots grown that same year.

If not pruned, these bushes produce many small blossoms but are unattractive because of the large amount of weak and dead wood that accumulates.

Extremely heavy pruning, almost like that done on grapes, will stimulate the growth of long, vigorous shoots. These branch freely and each branch produces a large flower cluster.

As new growth is needed each year, the bushes should be pruned while dormant. Remove about one-half of the new shoots entirely and cut the remainder back to 3 or 4 buds. This leaves only a stump and about a dozen

spurs. When the stump gets more than 3 feet tall, cut to a lateral sucker.

Heavy pruning not only results in the production of much more desirable

flowers, but it also holds down the size of the old bush. This is important, as the shrub is rather unattractive during the dormant period.

Cotoneaster

Cotoneaster is desirable mainly because of its attractive clusters of red berries that remain during the winter months. The best clusters of these berries are produced on spurs of 2-year-old wood.

The best pruning season is during winter, and it is not at all harmful to cut decorative berried shoots.

Most cotoneasters are ragged plants and if permitted they will grow rather tall. To keep them from growing tall, do not cut the long, 1-year-old shoots. The next winter they will be berried and may bend over.

Those that bend down can be left, while the upright ones should be cut

back to the main branch. New growth will come from near the cut to replace it. This way the plant will never be allowed to grow taller.

New growth on some varieties is not coarse and the plants can be trimmed with hedge shears. Eventually, heavily pruned plants will become dense, inside branches will weaken, and some will die out. Prune out older branches to keep the centers of shrubs open and new growth continually coming.

Prostrate cotoneaster should be pruned lightly, and should include complete removal of a few of the older branches that are low in vigor and no longer producing attractive berries.

Forsythia

Forsythia blooms appear on new shoots and on short spurs. Most people prefer long shoots covered with bloom. To get these, rather severe pruning is necessary. As the plant blooms early in the spring on spurs and 1-year-old wood, delay pruning until bloom time or immediately after. Cutting the bloom for decoration does no harm, as most of the new shoots should be removed as soon as blooming is over,

anyway. Such cutting forces vigorous new growth that will bloom the next year.

All of these shoots are not completely removed, however. As soon as blossoming is over, take out about one-half of the new shoots completely, and cut the rest back to 8 to 12 inches.

The short shoots and spurs left will produce a compact mass of bloom that improves the appearance of the bush.

Weigelia

Weigelia has growth and blooming habits similar to those of forsythia. Generally, however, pruning is not as severe. Some varieties are shy on bloom and will do best if in only moderate vigor. Leave a little more wood

throughout the plant, but do not allow it to become brushy. Make a particular effort to cut back all blossoming shoots as soon as the bloom period is over. Cut all of these shoots back to short stubs.

Holly

The holly tree generally will grow attractively with almost no training. However, sometimes the tree will get out of balance, or you may wish to cut some berries for Christmas decoration.

If the tree gets out of balance, trim off the side that has become too large. If part of it is not bushy enough, the twigs in that area can be made to branch by cutting them back very lightly. Heavy cutting or shearing of the outer tips will cause a dense growth that is undesirable.

Occasionally a holly tree will be so narrow and pointed in the top that it is out of proportion. Usually this is the result of too rapid growth the few

years previously. If let go, the tree usually will come back into balance. However, if it is as high as you want it, cut the top back to produce balance. Of course, the tree will continue to grow taller, but it will not have a central stem.

The cutting of berried twigs for decoration does no harm unless carried to extreme. If too much is cut off, future berry crops are reduced. Moderate annual cutting for Christmas greenery has been found to be the most satisfactory practice in keeping holly trees vigorous. Keep the tree open enough to let in air and sun to all the foliage. This helps prevent disease problems.

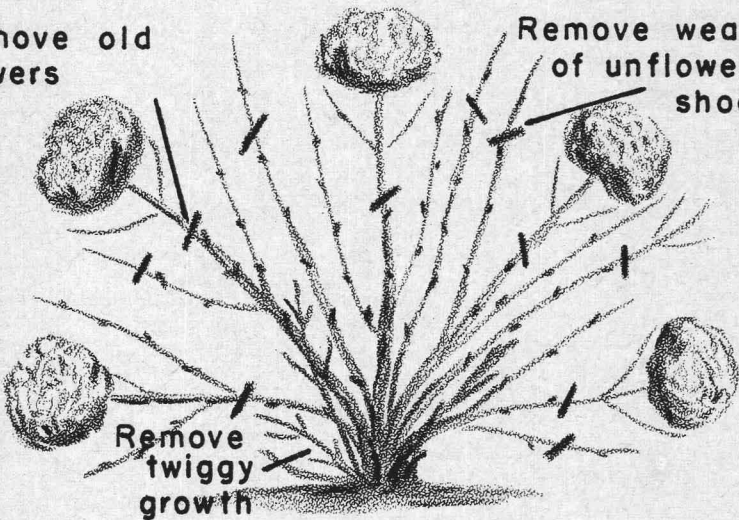
Hydrangea

Hydrangeas are valued for their large clusters of showy white, pink, or blue flowers. Flowers are produced in the summer on the ends of shoots produced the previous year.

To keep mature plants vigorous prune severely. Only about one-half of the shoots produce blossoms. Those that did not flower will bloom next year and, therefore, should be left

**Remove old
flowers**

**Remove weak tips
of unflowered
shoots**



Hydrangea

alone. Since shoots that flowered will not bloom again, cut all flower bearing shoots back to 2-bud spurs as soon as blooming is over.

Fertilization, mulching with leaf mold, and adequate watering will produce vigorous shoots from the spurs. The size and beauty of flowers is in proportion to the vigor of the entire shrub.

Flower color can be regulated by the use of acid or alkaline fertilizers. Soils high in acid make blue flowers and soils high in lime make pink flowers. White flowered forms are always white flowered.

If you wish to turn a pink hydrangea to a blue color, water it with a solution of 3 ounces of aluminum sulfate in a gallon of water. A simpler method is to spread 1 pound of aluminum sulfate on the soil around each plant and water it in. The presence of aluminum in the flower and in acid soil is responsible for the blue color.

To intensify the pink color, add a pound of lime around the plant and water it in. This probably will have no effect for at least a year until the trace of aluminum in the plant has been used. Lime makes aluminum in the soil not available to the plant.

Lilac

Lilac is a spring flowering shrub, but all its new growth is produced and all its next year's blossom buds are formed by the time it has finished blooming. This means that any time of year you prune a lilac you may remove flower buds.

To prevent this, prune only nonflowering wood. This is quite an order for an amateur, but if you carefully observe a bush when blooming you will notice that bloom is produced from large buds on the ends of vigorous new growths.

As lateral and spindly growths rarely produce bloom, they can be removed at

any time of year, but preferably during winter.

Cutting flowers removes new shoots, reducing next year's bloom, but unless you cut most of the blossoms this will not be serious. As soon as the bloom period is over remove old blossom heads.

Annual pruning is not essential, but if done, the bush can be maintained in good vigor.

Renovation of old bushes should be done in the winter. Cut back severely but leave most of the framework so new growth can rebuild the bush. Only one year's bloom will be lost.

Flowering Quince

Flowering quince is a spring flowering shrub and should be pruned after it has finished blooming. If you wish to pick a bouquet, completely remove a few flowering shoots. This prevents development of an overcrowded bush.

For best bloom, the shrub must be in only moderate vigor. Extra vigorous growth, as well as starved bushes, do

not produce many blossom buds. Best flowers are produced on spurs on wood 3 to 5 years old. Beyond that age the canes should be removed and replaced by some young ones. Do not let the bush get too crowded, as this prevents new shoots from coming and also restricts the amount of blooms.

Do not plant under a window unless

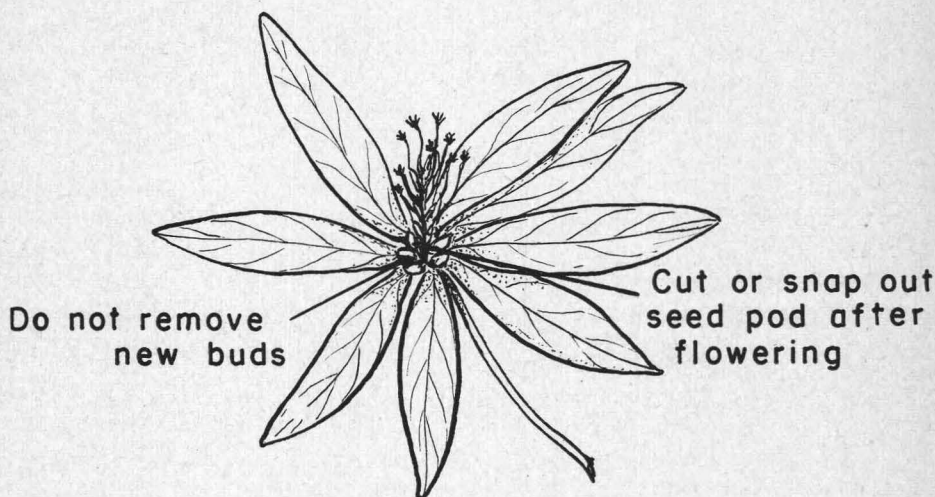
the window is 4 feet above the ground. Then, instead of heading the bush back severely, leave branches that are not too tall and completely remove the

extra tall and the weak ones. Cutting back stimulates new shoots from near the cut. These new shoots grow straight up and will cover the window.

Rhododendron and Azalea

Rhododendron and azalea produce blossoms on the tips of last year's shoots. As pruning would remove these, do not prune except to remove old blossom clusters. When a shrub gets too large, severe cutting back can be done. When this is necessary, take out about one-third of the tall growth

each year. This allows for some bloom each year and a new plant can be developed. These plants usually do not thrive except in areas of high rainfall and acid soils. To increase acidity of soil sprinkle aluminum sulfate on the ground around the plant. Use 1 pound to a square yard in spring and fall.



Rhododendron

Beauty Bush

Beauty Bush represents a group of plants that bloom in late spring. Blooms are produced on short lateral shoots arising from last year's long shoot growth. At the same time the lateral flowering shoots are growing, vigorous new shoots are produced throughout the plant. These are the ones that will produce the flowering laterals next year.

Prune as soon as the plant is through blooming in order to stimulate growth in young shoots and to remove old flower clusters. Dormant pruning, however, is satisfactory. In either case, remove all the shoots that have flowered and save most of the vigorous new shoots. In addition, as stems become 3 or 4 years old, cut them back to the ground or to a young branch

arising near the ground. By replacing the old branches with young ones, the plant is maintained in a young, vigor-

ous condition. To hasten regular, heavy flowering, prune lightly, if at all, the first few years after planting.

Spirea

Many varieties and kinds of spirea exist, and although growth habits of each determine the individual care needed, some general rules can be followed.

Prune spring blooming varieties, such as bridal wreath, during or immediately following the bloom period. Spirea branches naturally grow tall and droop, or weep, over. If cut back, the remaining stems are too stout to weep and new growth is produced from the cut ends. This raises the plant too high and destroys its graceful lines.

Prune lightly and remove all or nearly all of the older branches. New branches will be produced from near the ground. By this method the plants are kept young looking and graceful.

Many spirea plants receive no pruning for years and they continue to bloom well. However, they accumulate some dead wood and look shabby.

Some varieties are not compact and bloom in midsummer. You can shape them to blend with the other plants, but keep removing old canes and developing new ones.

Roses

Our common roses produce blossoms on the ends of new shoots that grow from dormant buds. Therefore, dormant pruning will reduce the number of blossoms. As dormant pruning increases the vigor it will produce better blossoms on longer stems. The amount you prune roses will be governed by whether you want a few excellent roses for cutting, a mass of flowers for color, or a moderate number suitable for both garden color and bouquets.

All roses sold by nurseries are grafted. The rootstocks do not sucker freely. You should be careful, however, not to select a root sucker as a replacement for the grafted top. Remove all suckers below the graft. This is not important with plants rooted from cuttings.

Bush roses

A young, vigorous bush produces sprouts at or near the base. If there

are 6 sprouts cut them back to 18 inches and remove all of the old canes. If enough new shoots from the base are not present, select 3 or 4 of the most vigorous of the older branches and cut them back, leaving 3 or 4 of the best new growths on each. Cut these back to 6 inches.

Rose bushes have a natural tendency to grow best in the tops, causing them to become taller each year. Prevent increasing tallness by cutting out the weakest canes, cutting the others back as much as possible, and still leaving some new growths.



Old wood
dark color
no buds



New wood
lighter
color
Smooth
bark.
New buds

Pillar roses

Pillar roses are adapted to climb on vertical posts or columns. They are pruned the same way raspberry bushes are pruned. Each year as soon as blossoming is over remove old canes and train the new, half grown canes.

Climbing roses

It is best to prune climbing roses every year, but they can be pruned only every third year. Climbing roses bloom profusely and the stems form clusters of young growths. These are weak and spindly. Unless removed they produce

many small roses. Remove most of the old wood and it will be replaced with young shoots. In spot pruning remove the spindly clusters.

Tree roses

Tree roses are bush roses grown on top of a stem $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 feet tall. Non-suckering rootstocks are used as a trunk. Some roses do better than others when trained this way. Prune as you would regular bush roses. However, the new shoots arise from the graft area instead of at ground level. Careful pruning and training are essential.

Hedges

Hedges serve many purposes. They are either formal or informal and serve as a living fence, a boundary, a barrier, or a background.

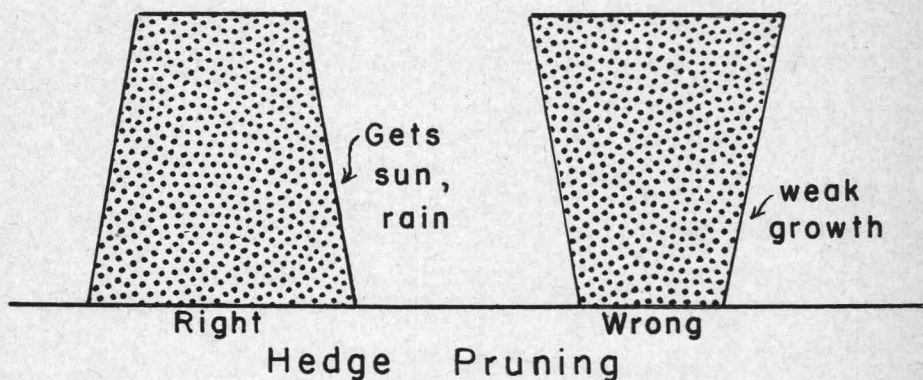
Formal hedges are sheared frequently and usually are made up of such plants as boxwood, cedar, yew, privet, barberry, laurel, and cotoneaster. The flower is of minor importance in these plants.

Informal hedges are allowed to grow freely and may or may not have flowers. Some plants used for such plantings are lilacs, spirea, spruce, and fir.

When you set out a new hedge, head it back severely to promote dense growth at the base. This is particularly necessary for deciduous plants.

The first year, cut the hedge plants back all the way around. This controls width and also causes much interlocking of branches.

Trimmed hedges should be wider at the base so that lower limbs get sunlight and moisture. Strong, dense growth will develop from this treatment, and less damage would result from snow or ice.



If only one trimming is to be done, it is best to do it in the summer just before growth stops. Cuts are soon covered by new short growth.

If two trimmings are to be made, do the first in late spring or early summer and the second about a month later to eliminate unevenness.

Evergreens usually are cut in the spring just before growth starts. Yews often are cut again in midsummer.

Summer pruning tends to check growth and weaken the plant, while dormant pruning favors wood production. Prune during dull weather to avoid burning of freshly cut tips.

Vines (Ornamentals)

Clematis

Large flowering types of clematis produce their bloom on new wood. Cut back all of last year's growth to about 12 to 15 inches. Small flowering types, used as a cover, should have a framework of young growth left for the production of foliage and flowers.

Wisteria

Allow the young wisteria plant to grow to moderate size before starting to prune. Then leave the leader and cut all other new growth to two buds in the fall. Summer tipping of new growth will aid in the production of flowers. Severe root pruning to shock plants which refuse to bloom will sometimes cause them to flower.

Grapes

There are 2 distinctly different systems of pruning grapes. One is to cut to spurs. The other is to trellis.

Use the spur system only on the California type of table grape, such as Muscat and Tokay. Eastern slip skin grapes, such as Concord, require trellising. But California types also can be trellised; therefore, if in doubt as to kind of grape, train the vines on a trellis or arbor.

Using the spur system, cut the best 10 to 12 canes on a stump back to spurs with 3 buds. These should be 1-year-old shoots growing from 2-year-old shoots. All other growth is removed. A shoot should grow from each bud and should produce 2 bunches of grapes.

In trellising, select 4 to 8 of the best shoots and leave them 2 to 3 feet long. For each shoot a 2-bud spur also is left. Train the shoots on a trellis. Larger vines usually grow on an arbor and more shoots are left, but the principle is the same. The more vigorous the bush, the more arms can be left to produce fruit.