



Horticulture

Pruning Mature Deciduous Shrubs

Correct pruning is one of the most essential of all management practices for shrubs in the home landscape. Proper pruning will help keep shrubs vigorous, maintain them in proper shape and form for a desirable landscape effect and add years to their usefulness.

Prune deciduous shrubs to maintain a natural habit of growth. Also remember to remove dead, diseased or broken branches. With most shrubs, the ideal time to prune is during the dormant season before new growth begins. Spring flowering shrubs, such as forsythia and lilac, should



be pruned shortly after flowering to avoid removing flower buds. Prune shrubs that bloom after the end of June in the winter or spring before new growth starts. These plants develop their flower buds during the spring growth period. Shrubs that bloom on current season's growth include Rose-of-Sharon.

In general, most deciduous shrubs should be thinned out rather than sheared or cut back. Thinning out prevents excessive or unsightly branch formation at the top of the plant and maintains the natural habit of growth. Thinning is done by cutting off a branch where it is

attached to the main stem. This method, the least conspicuous of all type of pruning, is best used on plants that are too dense. To develop branches that grow toward the outside of the plant, remove the inward growing branches and prune to an outward facing bud or branch.

Prune branches at the point of attachment to another branch or back to a bud. Pruning just above a bud prevents dieback of the stem, and a new branch will develop from the bud. Shearing causes dense growth to develop at the ends of the branches. Such growth shades the rest of the plant, which gradually loses its lower foliage and becomes sparse and spindly looking.

You can maintain plants at a given height and width for years by thinning out. This method of pruning is best done with hand pruning shears, not hedge shears. Thin out the oldest and tallest stems first.

Older shrubs that have become too large or contain considerable unproductive wood should be rejuvenated. Prune the plant by cutting off the oldest branches at the ground, leaving only the young stems. If there are not many younger stems, remove the older wood over a three year period to maintain the overall shape of the plant. New shoots that develop can be cut back to various lengths by the thinning out method, which encourages the development of strong branches. Plants that often become overgrown and benefit from rejuvenation include forsythia, honeysuckle, spirea, viburnum, weigela and other fast growing types. These plants, if extensively overgrown, severely weakened or otherwise unhealthy, can be cut back to the ground but may not bloom for one to two years, depending on the rate of regrowth. (MJM)

Educate Yourself Before You Buy

It is probably safe to say that the majority of mail order plant companies are legitimate businesses that strive to supply quality products to their customers. They can be a reliable source for unique plants that otherwise can be hard to find.

Whenever you are buying plants by mail, it pays to be cautious. Ads that make fantastic claims for plants should make you wary. Often a plant that sounds too good to be true will not live up to the claims made for it.

To avoid disappointment, read the ads closely. Find out everything you can about the plant being sold. First, find out what the plant is. Plant ads that use common names and do not

give the botanical names of the plants being sold make it difficult or impossible for you to learn more about the plant from other sources. The same common name may apply to several plants or a cute, catchy name may be made up for advertising purposes to attract potential buyers. Study the ad copy, what is missing may be more important than what is there.

Before you order plants, it is a good idea to comparison shop. Get catalogs from several companies and compare plant sizes, ages, hardiness zones, growing conditions, warranties, shipping or handling details and costs. Educate yourself before you purchase plants and then enjoy the quality plants you receive. (MJM)

All America Selection 2000 Winners

Cabbage "Savoy Express"
This is the earliest savoy



(crinkled) cabbage with a sweet, non-bitter, flavor perfect for slaw or other cabbage salads. "Savoy Express" heads mature in about 55 days from transplanting. The compact plant can be grown at close spacing about a foot apart in the garden. The small heads are about 1 to 1 1/2 pounds. "Savoy Express" cabbage is recommended for planting as a spring or fall crop and it may be the earliest cabbage on the block.

Sweet corn "Indian Summer"

The first sweet corn with



colorful kernels. "Indian Summer" kernels are yellow, white, red or purple. "Indian Summer" ears are large, eight inches, and gardeners need to

check the corn silk for maturity about 79 days from sowing seed.

Cosmos "Cosmic Orange"
"Cosmic Orange" is an improved Cosmos sulphureus



which deserves a sunny site in your garden. "Cosmic Orange" reaches a height of about 12 inches in a full sun garden. The vigorous plants provide abundant, bright orange two inch blooms all summer. Basically pest and disease free, "Cosmic Orange" is adaptable and easy to grow. This annual will thrive on minimal care. Only water, sun and fertile soil are needed for "Cosmic Orange" to bloom all summer and into the fall.

Dianthus "Melody Pink"

Sprays of single pink blooms distinguish "Melody



Pink" from other annual dianthus. Bred specifically for use as a cut flower, this dianthus produces one inch flowers with a serrated petal edge, giving it an old fashioned lacy look. The long stems are desirable for fresh bouquets. "Melody Pink" will mature to a height of 22 to 24 inches. "Melody Pink" is

quite heat and cold tolerant offering gardeners many months of flowering.

Pea "Mr. Big"
"Mr. Big" is a superior English or garden pea. There are



several significant improvements including consistently large pea pods. The larger pods are easier to shell. The fresh sweet peas taste delicious. "Mr. Big" produces a high yield, because the plants are early, set two pods per node and is disease resistant. "Mr. Big" is an indeterminate vine reaching two to three feet in the garden. Plants will need a trellis for vertical support. Harvest mature pea pods in 58 to 62 days.

Pepper "Blushing Beauty"
The name "Blushing



Beauty" describes the color changes of this productive sweet

See **WINNERS** on page 11

2000 March/April Garden Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Order seeds	2 Put up bird houses	3	4
5	6	7 Prune fruit trees	8 Start a garden journal	9 Make a garden plan	10	11
12	13 Prune grape vines	14	15 Service lawn mower & garden equipment	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 Start seeds indoors for transplants	24	25
26	27	28	29 Turn compost pile	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6 Plant cool season vegetable seeds outside	7	8
9	10 Power rake or aerify bluegrass	11	12 Apply fungicide to pines for tip blight	13	14	15
16	17 Fertilize bluegrass	18 Fertilize tall fescue	19 Apply pre-emergence	20 Apply fungicide to crabapples for cedar apple rust and scab	21	22 Earth Day
23	24	25	26 Control iris borer	27	28 Arbor Day	29 Spring Affair at State Fair Park
30						

Many of us need reminders. That is the purpose of this calendar. Check the calendar each month and follow the recommendations if they are necessary in your landscape situation. (MJM)