

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 natural habit of growth; remove dead, diseased or broken branches; promote flower and fruit development; and encourage vigorous growth of plants. 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 next years 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 or several years, depending on the rate of regrowth. (MJM)

Basil for Your Garden

Basil is one of the most popular herbs grown in the world. It is native to Asia and can be found growing wild in tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world.

Basil has many uses, the most common of which is its culinary use. As a fresh herb, it is used to flavor foods such as vegetables, poultry, and fish. Basil can also be used dried. The flowers of basil are also edible and can be an attractive addition to salads and other dishes.

Besides its edibility, basil is an aromatic herb and is often used in potpourri and sachets. As an ornamental in the flower garden, basil has attractive foliage and flowers.

Basil is a tender perennial grown as an annual. It can be grown easily from seed. Start seed indoors four or five weeks before the last frost date. It likes warm temperatures (about 75° F) for germination. Seed can also be sown directly in the ground outdoors after it has warmed in the spring. Plant



basil outdoors after all danger of frost is past. Basil does not tolerate cold temperatures. Plant in full sun. Water regularly with an inch of water a week. Basil can also be propagated vegetatively through tip cuttings. Root cuttings in moist potting soil.

To harvest, remove terminal growth whenever four sets of true leaves can be left on the plant. This encourages bushier growth and increased yield. For best foliage flavor, cut before flowering. After cutting, wash and pat leaves dry. Use immediately or store in perforated plastic bags in the refrigerator. When drying the leaves, harvest early in the day but after dew has dried. Spread leaves on screens or loosely bundle and air dry.

Basil is a member of the mint

See *BASIL* on page 12

2001 All America Selection

'Margarita Rosita' looks different from other portulaca as a young plant. It has a compact mounded habit and looks like a rock garden or alpine plant. Large one inch semi-double rose flowers adorn the small three to four inch fleshy leaved plants. 'Margarita Rosita' needs a sunny garden spot or patio container to reach its mature spreading plant habit of about 12 to 14 inches. Heat and drought tolerant, 'Margarita Rosita' will flower continuously for months if given minimal garden care.



'Margarita Rosita'

'Profusion White' captured the All America Selection (AAS)



'Profusion White'

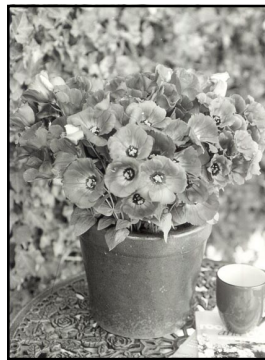
Gold Medal as a breeding breakthrough due to the ease of growing and length of the flowering season. This is the only white zinnia with two inch single daisy-like flowers and proven disease resistance. The plant resists powdery mildew, allowing 'Profusion White' to flower profusely in the fall when other zinnias deteriorate from mildew. 'Profusion White' plants fill flowerbeds, spreading 12 to 24 inches in a full sun garden. No pinching or pruning is needed. 'Profusion White' plants are capable of producing a masterful display of white blooms from early spring through fall with minimal care.

'Avalon Bright Pink' is an improved dwarf nicotiana that provides multitudes of star-shaped blooms throughout the growing season. The color is an unusual shade of bright pastel pink, visible from quite a distance. The heat tolerant plants will reach a mature height of 10 inches and spread 10 to 12 inches. 'Avalon Bright Pink' is maintenance free and deadheading is not required. 'Avalon Bright Pink' proved it's superior garden performance in AAS trials across North America. Easy-to-grow, 'Avalon Bright Pink' is widely adaptable to annual or perennial border plantings as well as patio container culture.



'Avalon Bright Pink'

Eustoma 'Forever Blue' will provide gardeners their favorite blue color throughout the gardening season. The large two inch blue flowers decorate the vigorous plants.



Eustoma 'Forever Blue'

'Forever Blue' plants have a distinct branching habit, benefiting the gardener with more blooms and a dense plant. 'Forever Blue' plants will reach 12 inches when mature, in a full sun garden. Proven to be heat tolerant, 'Forever Blue' plants will benefit from deadheading. These attractive plants are perfectly adaptable to patio containers.

'Honey Select' is a sweet corn that has proven its delicious sweet flavor and tender eating quality in trials across North America. 'Honey Select' has excellent flavor and is easy to grow. Unlike other super sweet types, 'Honey Select' does not require isolation from other corn pollen. Maturing in about 79 days, gardeners will find yellow ears about eight inches long. Mature ears can be harvested over a longer time without loss of eating quality.



'Honey Select'

'Ring of Fire' is a five inch sunflower having golden petal edges and a ring of red surrounding the chocolate brown center. Decidedly different from other sunflowers, 'Ring of Fire' stands out in a crowd of plain gold or yellow flowers. Later to bloom, 'Ring of Fire' may require 120 days to show bicolor blooms but this late season display is often what the garden needs for a fresh new look. Needing a full sun garden, 'Ring of Fire' plants may reach four to five feet tall, spreading two to three feet. The long flower stems are perfect for cut flowers. If not cut, flowers may produce seed for wildlife, another benefit to grow 'Ring of Fire.'



'Ring of Fire'

'Giant Marconi' is an improved Italian grilling pepper. About six to eight inches long, the tapered green pepper will mature to red on the 30 inch plant. 'Giant Marconi' tastes excellent raw but is best when grilled. It has a memorable sweet, smoky flavor. 'Giant Marconi' was judged best in its class for earliness, yield, pepper size and flavor. Plants are resistant to Potato Virus and Tobacco Mosaic Virus, which means the plants tend to live longer for an improved yield. Green peppers can be harvested in about 72 days from transplanting.

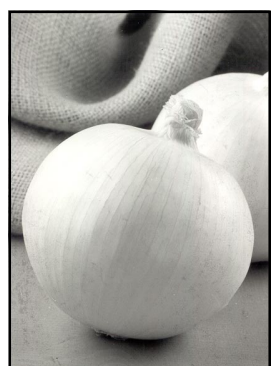


'Giant Marconi'



'Jolly'

'Jolly' is a delicious, new pink tomato. The vigorous indeterminate vines produce abundant clusters of one ounce peach shaped fruit. Gardeners can expect 9 to 14 tomatoes per cluster. 'Jolly' plants yield ripe fruit in about 70 to 75 days from transplanting. 'Jolly' will produce the highest quality tomatoes if vines are pruned and tied to vertical support. 'Jolly' plants are easy-to-grow and offer meaty, sweet, pink tomatoes fresh from your garden.



'Super Star'

'Super Star' is an improved white sweet onion recommended for all spring gardens in North America because it is day length neutral. Most onions require long days (over 12 hours of sunlight) or short days to bulb. 'Super Star' does not have this requirement so it is widely adaptable. If seed is sown and transplanted early, 'Super Star' onions can weigh one pound or more, when mature in about 100 days. 'Super Star' onions are exceptional when eaten raw, in salads or sandwiches. 'Super Star' is milder, sweeter and larger than 'White Sweet Spanish' the closest comparison. (MJM)