

## Pruning Shrubs in the Landscape

Pruning is the most important maintenance practice for shrubs in the landscape. Rarely will you find a shrub in your landscape that doesn't need some pruning each year. Proper pruning will help the shrub produce a more attractive, vigorous, well-formed plant. Also, pruning will often increase flowering and extend the usefulness of your shrub.

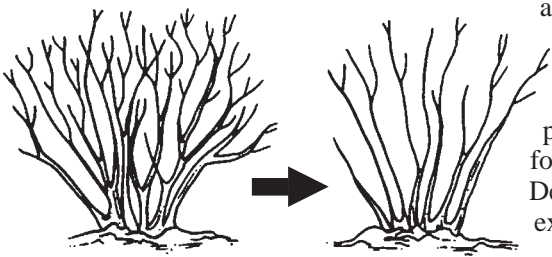
Shrubs should be examined on an annual basis with some pruning carried out each year. Too many homeowners neglect their shrubs and fail to prune for several years. Shrubs become overgrown, a loss of vigor may occur, requiring heavy pruning to reduce the size of the plant, and in many cases permanent damage occurs.

### Why Prune?

Pruning is a necessary practice to maintain healthy, vigorous shrubs and keep them within desirable size.

1. The first step in pruning is to remove all dead, broken or diseased branches. This is necessary to maintain the health and vigor of the plant.

2. Remove branches misshaped, crowded, rubbing or drooping on other branches for support. This might be termed preventative maintenance, removing these branches before injury occurs by rubbing or crowding other branches and causing loss of vigor and death by crowding.



Thinned out (or maintenance) pruning

3. Prune to establish shape and size or thin the branches. This prevents shrubs from becoming overgrown and prevents the need for severe pruning to reduce the size of overgrown shrubs.

4. To stimulate flower and fruit

development. Many flowering shrubs will produce more flower buds the following season if old spent flowers are removed from the plant when they lose their attractiveness. Azalea is an example.

5. To rejuvenate old, overgrown shrubs to restore their shape and vigor. When shrubs become overgrown heavy pruning is necessary to restore them to their normal shape and vigor. Forsythia is an example.

6. To reduce plant size to prevent crowding, or shading other plants.

7. To shape or train a plant in an unnatural form. Hedges, espalier, etc. are examples of this type of pruning.

### When to Prune

Many people have a misconception that the only time to prune is during the winter when plants are dormant. Most landscapes will include different plants, which will require pruning throughout the year. Never hesitate to cut out tall, fast-growing or unsightly limbs while they are growing. If tip buds are pinched on new growth, lateral growth occurs and reduces the upward growth.

Knowing when to prune is just as important as knowing how to prune. To insure proper response of the plant to pruning, the flowering and fruiting habits of the plants must be known.

As a general rule shrubs that flower before July 1, should be pruned immediately after flowering. These plants develop flower buds during the summer for the following spring bloom. If pruning is delayed, any pruning will remove potential flowers for the next season. Azalea, Forsythia, Deutzia and Crabapples are some examples.

Shrubs that have flowers after July 1 should be pruned in the winter or early spring before growth starts. These plants develop flower buds in early spring. Althea, P.G. Hydrangea, Hybrid tea roses, are some examples of plants that bloom after July 1.

Shrubs that are prized for their fruits — such as Holly, etc., should not

be pruned until after their fruit has lost their beauty regardless of when they flower.

Evergreens, broadleaf and narrow leafed types, may be pruned anytime the wood is not frozen. Narrow-leafed evergreens will not develop new shoots on the older wood, so don't cut toward the base of the shrub beyond the living foliage portion of the branches. A good time to prune evergreens is early December so that the prunings can be used to make Christmas decorations.

Late summer or early fall (August and September) pruning should be avoided. Pruning at this time encourages new growth to develop which will not harden sufficiently to withstand winter freezes.

### Prune Shrubs When They are Young

Begin pruning plants when they are young and small. Early spring causes the plant to develop a compact limb system near ground level. A compact branching system is difficult to achieve if pruning is delayed several years. On small plants prune back limbs to stimulate growth of basal branches.

### Do not shear:

Shearing destroys the normal shape of most shrubs. To reduce the size and to produce a more compact growth, cut out the undesirable longer limbs from inside the plant. Do not cut all limbs at the same heights.

### Practice proper cutting techniques:

In making small cuts in heading back or thinning, cut branches at different lengths, 1/4 inch above an active bud.

For some shrubs, removing the branch back to ground level is desirable. New shoots should be reduced to about 1/2 to 2/3 of their length to encourage lateral shoots to develop.

When removing limbs over 1 inch in diameter, cut back flush to the trunk, a large limb or to a side limb. These precautions are not always necessary on limbs smaller than 1 inch. (DJ)

## Prune Trees Correctly To Maintain Proper Growth

Proper tree pruning is essential in developing trees with strong structures and desirable form.

Landscape trees require a high level of care to maintain their safety and aesthetics. Young trees that receive appropriate pruning measures require little corrective pruning when they mature. Pruning should be done with an understanding of how trees respond to each cut. Improper pruning can cause damage that will last for the life of the tree, or worse, shorten the tree's life.

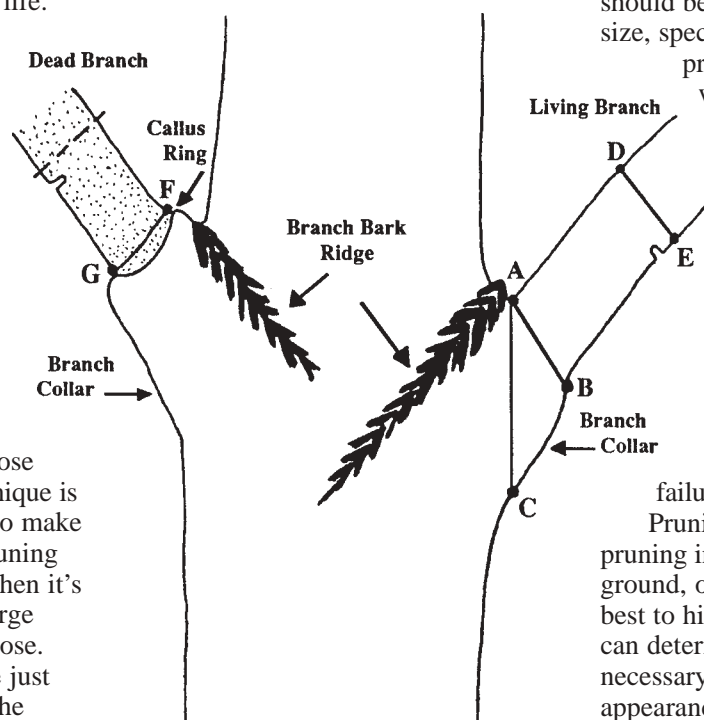
Pruning removes dead branches and crowded or rubbing limbs. Routine thinning doesn't necessarily improve a tree's health; heavy pruning can be a significant health stress for the tree. Pruning can be done at any time during the year, but growth is maximized and wound closure is fastest if it takes place before spring growth.

There are certain principles to be considered when pruning young trees. Always have a purpose before a cut is made. Proper technique is essential. Learn where and how to make the cuts before picking up the pruning shears. Waiting to prune a tree when it's mature can create the need for large cuts that the tree cannot easily close.

Pruning cuts should be made just outside the branch collar where the

branch attaches to the trunk. For small trees, most cuts can be made with hand pruning shears. The scissor type, or bypass blade hand pruners are preferred over the anvil type. Cuts larger than a half inch in diameter should be made with lopping shears. Make sure tools are kept clean and sharp.

When pruning, it's important to establish a strong scaffold structure. Scaffold branches provide the framework for mature trees. The goal in



training young trees is to establish a strong trunk with sturdy, well-spaced branches. The strength of the branch structure depends on the relative sizes of the branches, the branch angles and the limb spacing. These factors vary from tree to tree. Good pruning techniques remove structurally weak branches while maintaining the natural form of the tree. For most young trees, maintain a single, dominant trunk leader.

The amount of live tissue that should be removed depends on the tree size, species and age as well as the pruning objectives. Younger trees will tolerate the removal of more living tissue than mature trees. Branches should be well spaced radially and along the trunk. It's important to maintain an even distribution of foliage along large limbs and in the lower portion of the crown. Over-thinning reduces the tree's sugar production capacity and can create tip-heavy limbs that are prone to failure.

Pruning trees can be dangerous. If pruning involves working above the ground, or using power equipment, it's best to hire a professional arborist that can determine what type of pruning is necessary to improve the health, appearance and safety of trees. (DJ)

## WATERWHEEL

### Storing Water for an Emergency



Note: This is part of a series of articles related to rural water issues.

If you want to store water for an emergency, start by selecting a clean food-grade plastic or glass container with a tight-fitting, screw-on cap. The container may be a plastic or glass container that previously held beverages, such as a 2-liter soda bottle or a water, juice, punch or milk jug. Also, you can buy a new plastic container for water storage in most sporting goods departments.

Prepare a sanitizing solution by mixing one teaspoon of household liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of tap water. Prepare enough sanitizing solution to completely fill the container. Pour the solution into the container and let it stand for two minutes.

Drain the container and fill it with potable tap water suitable for drinking and cooking. Place the cap on the container and attach a label describing the contents and when it was prepared. Store in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. Repeat the sanitizing procedure and replace the water supply every six months. (DJ)

## Understand Liability Issues Before Raising Livestock

You've finally managed to buy the acreage you always dreamed of owning. Not a real farm perhaps, but large enough to raise a few chickens, a goat or two and the horse the kids always wanted.

Sounds like the dream of a lot of new country residents. As with most things, however, there are potential downfalls to animal ownership, not the least of which is the liability an owner has if an animal strays and/or trespasses on another's property.

Livestock owners are liable for expenses incurred by the landowner if the animal causes property damage. If the landowner takes custody of the stray animal, the livestock owner is responsible for any costs incurred, including any maintenance costs.

If you are the landowner and someone's livestock trespasses upon your property, you may take custody of that livestock. If you do, you are required to notify the owner that you have custody of the animal. If you do not know who owns the livestock, you must make a reasonable effort to determine the owner's identity.

If your livestock strays upon a road or highway and is the cause of an accident, you are liable for damages, including medical expenses.

For further information about livestock and liability, talk to your insurance provider. (DJ)