

Olson's Garden Shoppe Presents
An Introduction to Pruning

Please List 3 things you want to know before leaving this class (Please check them off as your question is answered.)

- 1
- 2
- 3

Why should you prune?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

What should you prune?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

When is the best time to prune?

The best conditions for pruning occur during cold weather when tree and shrub growth is minimal and it is dormant. Pruning should be avoided in the spring when the bark is loose and stem damage may be high. Special consideration should be given to the time of flowering and desired result.

What pruning technique should I use?



Figure 5. Heading



Figure 6. Thinning to ground level.



Figure 7. Thinning back to main branch or trunk.

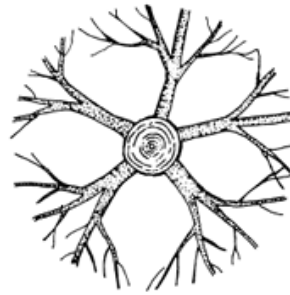
Fruit trees-

Pruning a fruit tree can be very challenging. If you take off too much you will get several feet of growth each year and very little fruit to show for your hard work. Not enough pruning, this includes not pruning, can result in inconsistent crops and stunted trees.

- Remember apples, pears, cherries, and plums produce best on the 2-3 yr wood.
- Peaches produce on last year's vegetative growth

Fruit trees are pruned to keep the appropriate age of wood on the tree. (i.e. lots of 1 yr wood in peaches and 2-3yr wood in the others) Controlling hormones is the key to a successful orchard or home garden. Plant hormones are found in the tip of each branch; the hormones suppress the growth of buds below the tip. These hormones can be manipulated by pruning. The influence of these hormones is most apparent on the vertical shoots and least on the flat limbs. So pruning branches so they are near horizontal will stimulate new shoot development and initiate fruit buds. Try to do most of the pruning before the buds break (i.e. it is best to prune them while it is still frozen outside and trees are dormant).

Pruning fruit trees helps to open up the tree so that each branch receives an equal amount of sun light. The illustration below gives an example of spacing branches around the trunk. Also branching should be spaced vertically.



There should be a 12'' to 18'' between branches going up the trunk.

Shade Trees –

- Always remember to watch for power lines before pruning trees.

Shade trees are generally pruned to repair or prevent damage. They can also be pruned to allow more light through to the ground below. Begin by pruning out all broken limbs. The next to go are the ones that

may cause problems in the future; such as those which cross with another branch, grow back toward the main trunk or have a weak crotch angle. Prune the limb or branch to the nearest bud or shoot that exhibits the desired result. (i.e. if you want the tree to be wider, prune to a shoot or bud that is pointed in that direction.) Never remove more than 30% of a tree's canopy at any one given pruning as this will result in water suckers, which are a weak – fast growing shoot that robs the tree from vital nutrients. The picture below is a before and after example.



Table 1. Time of pruning based on time of flowering.

Prune After Flowering	
Azalea	Japanese Pieris
Beautybush	Lilac
Bigleaf Hydrangea	Mockorange
Bradford Pear	Oakleaf Hydrangea
Bridalwreath Spirea	Pearlbush
Clematis	Pyracantha
Climbing Roses	Redbud
Crabapple	Saucer Magnolia
Deutzia	Star Magnolia
Dogwood	Shrub Honeysuckle
Doublefile Vibernum	Thunberg Spirea
Flowering Almond	Vanhoutte Spirea
Flowering Cherry	Weigelia
Flowering Quince	Winter Daphne
Forsythia	Wisteria
Japanese Kerria	Witchhazel
Prune Before Spring Growth Begins	
Beautyberry	Goldenrain Tree
Camellia	Japanese Barberry
Chaste Tree (Vitex)	Japanese Spirea
Cranberrybush Viburnum	Mimosa
Crapemyrtle	Nandina
Floribunda Roses	Rose-of-Sharon (Althea)
Fragrant Tea Olive	Sourwood
Grandiflora Roses	Anthony Waterer Spirea
Gloss Abelia	Sweetshrub

Shrubs-

Please see Table 1. Timing is very important when dealing with shrubs.

As a general rule shrubs that flower first thing in the spring (i.e. lilac and forsythia) should be pruned once they have finished blooming. By the end of the growing season they have set their flower buds for the next year and pruning late in the season would remove most of the next year's blossoms.

Summer and fall blooming shrubs should be pruned before new growth comes on in the season. There blossoms are generated on the current year's growth. Some shrubs such as Blue Mist Shrub, 'Anthony Waterer' Spirea and Butterfly Bush can be cut back completely to ground level in the early spring.

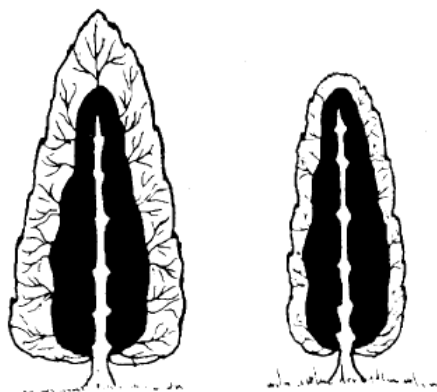
*Always remove dead or broken limbs upon discovery, as they are very inviting to insects and disease.

Narrow Leafed Evergreens-

Narrow leaved evergreens such as a juniper or an arborvitae can be easily pruned, the biggest challenge is "hiding" the cut beneath new growth.



Prune evergreen shrubs so that new growth covers stubs.



Pyramidal junipers may be shortened by 20 percent, but do not cut into the dead zone (shown here in black).

Arborvitae and junipers develop what are called "dead zones" in the center of the plant. Pruning into the dead zone can result in a scraggly looking shrub that could take years to fix. Arborvitae and junipers should be pruned in March or April, but can be lightly pruned anytime throughout the season.



Prune evergreen trees by removing half of new growth.

Although many pines and spruces do not require pruning, it can be beneficial. Removing the candles each spring can easily control the height and make it more compact. A candle is the new growth found at the tip of each branch. (i.e. Mugho pines respond very well to this). On larger trees a similar method can be used to control the height. Removing the center leader of each branch will stimulate tighter branching. The illustrations below demonstrate both techniques.



Trim mugho pine "candles" by half to promote compactness.

