

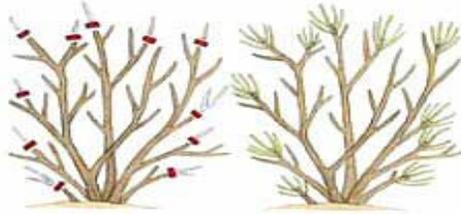


# PRUNING

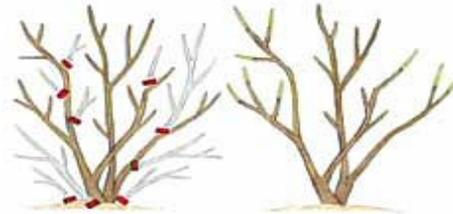
Pruning trees and shrubs enhances their beauty and encourages their growth. Of all garden techniques, pruning is the least understood, and therefore the most frequently neglected. There are three reasons to prune; to train, to maintain and to repair. When pruning, one would want to address issues such as; rubbing or crossing branches, inadequate spacing between branches, water sprouts, suckers, girdling roots, narrow or weak crotches, dead and broken branches and awkward or unattractive branches.

There are 3 types of pruning cuts:

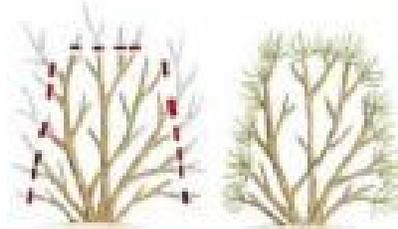
**Heading Cuts** (Tip Pruning)- to encourage branching and thickening. Use heading cuts to shorten growth and encourage branching.



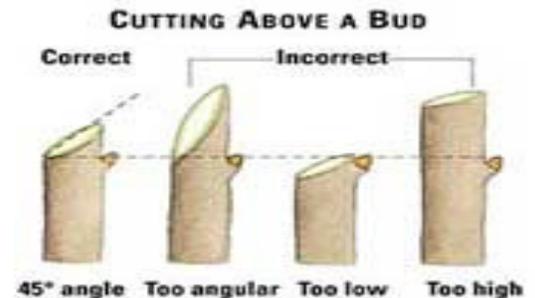
**Thinning Cuts**- to enhance natural shape and to open up the plant. Use thinning cuts to remove entire stems improving the appearance and health.



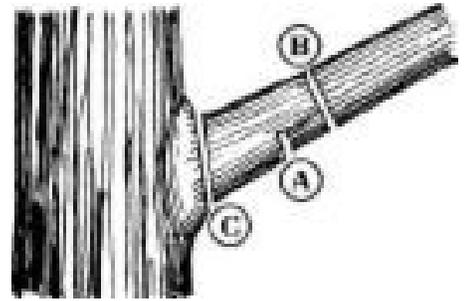
**Shearing**- to form a hedge. When shearing slightly taper the plant out towards the bottom to allow light to reach the bottom of the shrub to maintain uniformity through the whole plant.



**Correct Heading Cuts**- Choose a bud pointing in the desired direction, then cut at a 45 degree angle (pointed upward towards the bud side) about an eighth of an inch above the bud tip. On plants with the opposite buds cut straight across the stem an 1/8" above the bud tips, then rub off the bud that's not going in the desired direction.



**Correct Thinning Cuts-** Removing branches close to the trunk or another branch, needs to be done carefully so as not to harm the branch collar (tapered area where branch meets branch). Cut straight, just outside the branch collar. Keeping the collar intact will aid in healing and prevent disease. When removing large branches do so with a three cut process, this way you don't tear the remaining trunk or branch. First, undercut the branch halfway through about 6 inches away from the desired removal point. Second, sever the branch completely just beyond the first cut. This removes the weight of the branch. Third, make the final straight cut just outside the branch collar.



**Tools to Use-** The size of branch dictates more than anything which tool to use.



**Pruning Shears-** There are two types of pruning shears; bypass and anvil. Bypass shears cut like scissors with a blade passing a blade. This shear makes a cleaner cut and fits in tighter spaces than the anvil type. It can cut branches up to 5/8" in diameter. Anvil shears cut like a knife on a cutting board with a blade cutting against a flat metal surface. This shear is more powerful than the bypass type. These can cut branches up to 3/4" in diameter. Ratcheting models are great for easing hand fatigue.



**Loppers-** These are essentially heavy duty long handled pruning shears that come in bypass or anvil type. They can cut branches up to 2" in diameter. They extend your reach with several handle lengths available. Some gardeners with weak hands may find these to be easier than shears for smaller branches.



**Pruning Saw-** These are used for branches greater than 1" in diameter. Several sizes are available, some fitting in very tight places. Hand pruning saws work well on branches up to 5" in diameter (larger branches than that should be cut with a chain saw). Some blades only cut with the downward motion, where as some cut with upward and downward motions.



**Hedge Shears-** Used to maintain formal hedges. Only use hedge shears on soft new growth.

When pruning limbs larger, or higher than you or your tools can handle, hire a professional with the knowledge and right equipment for the job!

**When to Prune-** Non-flowering trees and shrubs can be pruned almost any time of the year, except during subzero weather. It is usually best to prune bleeders, like maple and birch during the late summer or early fall. Spring flowering species should be tip pruned right after they bloom. Summer or fall flowering species should be pruned in early spring. Fruit trees should be pruned in early March.

Training a tree by pruning when it's young will save lots of time, expense and worry. Not to mention creating a beautiful tree!