



GREEN THUMB GARDENING



By CHRISTINE COLE

PRUNING FLOWERING SHRUBS

Flowering shrubs are a colorful addition to every yard and garden. To improve their health and appearance they must be pruned regularly. However, not all shrubs are pruned in the spring.

The following summer flowering shrubs should be pruned now (early spring - before leaves begin to grow): Cinquefoil, Highbush Cranberry, Hydrangeas, Spireas, and Roses. Spring flowering shrubs such as: Beauty Bush, Deutzia, Flowering Almond, Forsythia, Mock-Orange, Lilac and Weigela should be pruned after they have flowered. Therefore, these shrubs will be pruned later in the season.

Shrubs that are extremely dense and have too many branches should be thinned out. To thin out many shrubs, the branches will have to be pruned off at ground level. Removing some of the branches will give the plant a more open appearance and increase the light that reaches the middle of the plant.

However, shrubs that appear too "thin" will also need pruning. Pruning back or shortening the length of several branches will encourage more branching. Pruning in this manner will result in a smaller and denser shrub.

A hand pruner or secateur should be used to prune branches up to 1/2" in diameter and branches up to 1" are best removed with lopping shears. In addition, all cuts should be made just above a bud and on a slight angle.

So, if you have any summer flowering shrubs, it is time to get your tools sharpened and start pruning. But, don't put the tools too far away when you have finished, the spring flowering shrubs will have to be done later in the season.

Each week Christine Cole of Tuitman's Garden Centre and Landscaping, Highway 25, 1 mile south of Acton, 853-2480, will be presenting helpful tips and information to assist you in creating your garden show-place!

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