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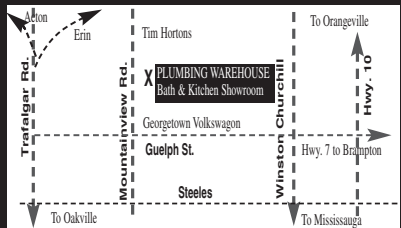


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A proper pruning primer

While many might think of gardening as getting down on your hands and knees, dirtying your hands in the soil and hopefully sprouting a nice batch of flowers or vegetables, any good gardener will tell you there's plenty of additional work that goes into keeping your garden both beautiful and bountiful. Take, for instance, the pruning of your trees, bushes and shrubs. Many a garden is made even more aesthetically appealing by surrounding trees, bushes or shrubs, but only if they are well pruned.

Knowing when to prune is essential when trying to maintain a healthy and beautiful-looking garden. To help you do just that, here's a guideline you can follow that should keep your trees, shrubs and gardens looking as good as can be.

- Rosebushes: Old shoots should be removed by late winter or early spring at the very latest. Leave between four and eight canes, but remove any that are growing inward. When cutting them down, try to cut them to right around two feet above ground, and cut close to an inch above a bud or strong shoot.

- Deciduous trees: For deciduous trees, pruning for growth typically is unnecessary. If you're looking to shape your trees, then do your pruning/shaping

in mid to late winter.

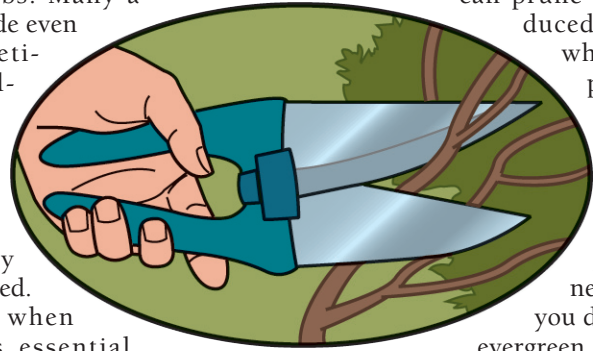
- Deciduous shrubs: Once your shrubs have flowered (typically by mid to late spring), that's the best time for pruning. Many times these shrubs will also have unruly or unsightly branches that should be removed.

- Evergreen shrubs: Unlike deciduous shrubs, evergreens won't flower. But you can prune once they've produced cones or shrubs, which typically happens between late winter and early spring.

- Evergreen trees: More often than not, evergreen trees do not need to be pruned. If you do need to prune an evergreen tree, wait until the tree has grown substantially, or else you'll just end up pruning again. Late spring and early summer are typically good times to prune evergreens, as they likely won't grow much afterwards.

- Fruit trees: You'll want to prune fruit trees before any buds start swelling, which means you'll likely be pruning these in late winter or early spring. Branches growing inward as well as limbs growing straight up should be removed.

- Berry bushes: Once you have finished harvesting the berries, prune your berry bush. Oftentimes, waiting until late fall or early winter is necessary. It's also important to keep the pruning to a minimum, as maintaining shape is good for the appeal of a berry bush.



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