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# Get Out and

## Pruning Evergreens

Unfortunately, most People tend to forget that evergreens need the same amount of attention as any other plant. It's important to remove dead, diseased or damaged branches, and open the structure enabling air to circulate throughout. There are a few easy steps to take to ensure that your evergreen is healthy and lush for many seasons to come.

To start, gently pull apart the branches, and removing any brown, diseased or damaged branches. If you are uncertain of the branches condition, using your finger nail or clippers gently scrape a thin layer of the bark off. Wood that is still viable will be green just under the cambium or bark. If the branch is black, brown or dry looking, the branch is dead. Injured wood is wood that has a visible marking, gauged or discoloured.

Next clip away all of the branches that have had the top portion of foliage pruned so many times that it looks like a mass of twigs growing from the same branch.

Many people also tend to believe that a thick full plant that

you can barely see through is ideal. This is not the case. Some evergreens also require the occasional thinning. Thinning is just simple removing a few branches that are not detrimental to the shape, support, or stability of the plant, allowing the air and light to penetrate. This technique is generally used on hedges and dramatically improves the overall health, appearance, and growth rate of the plant.

For evergreen shrubs, it is also a good idea to reduce their height. This is done simply by removing last seasons growth by half or more. This will promote better internal branching and increase their fullness.

After all the above steps have been completed, clean up any leaves, branches and twigs that may remain under the plant. You have taken all this time to rid the plant of disease and imperfections. It would be a shame to leave the contaminated branches there to re infect the plant. Also, you will have eliminated the debris in which insects love to hide.

Lastly, to keep your plant moist and healthy with minimal effort, place a nice saucer of mulch under the plant, making sure that it is not directly touching the main stem or is not on top of any branching. This is especially important to a freshly planted shrub. This will ensure that the plant remains moist, even if you do forget to water, or are heading up to the cottage for a week.

by Michelle McMullen  
Sales Associate  
Sunland Garden Centre

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