

# General Pruning

## TERMS TO KNOW

Broadleaf Evergreen—Trees or shrubs that have foliage all year long (such as a Camellia), but are not conifers (such as a Pine).

Deciduous—Any plant that drops all of its foliage at a given time (usually in autumn)

Evergreen—Any plant that never loses all of its foliage at one time.

Lateral Bud—Grow along the sides of the shoot where the leaves attach. They produce the sideways growth that results in the plant becoming bushy. These buds stay dormant, however, until the shoot grows long enough that the lateral buds are no longer under the influence of the terminal bud's hormones (see 'Terminal Bud' below).

Lateral Pruning (Heading Back)—Removing the branch or stem to a lateral bud or shoot, growing in the direction you want the branch to go. Heading stimulates the growth of the lateral buds just below the cut, resulting in clusters of shoots. Helps with changing the direction a plant sends out its branches.

Pinching—Simply removing new shoots with forefinger and thumb or pair of shears. Should only be attempted on soft new growth

Shearing—Cutting all branches to one desired length, creating an even surface.

Terminal Bud—Grows at the tip of a shoot, over time making that shoot longer. While they're actively growing, terminal buds send hormones out to prohibit the growth of other buds.

Thinning—Cutting a limb or branch back to where it begins (the trunk) or to its junction with another branch. When a plant sends up stems directly from the ground, the cut should occur at ground level. This encourages growth on remaining parts of the plant and aids in circulation.

## SEASONAL TASKS IN THE GARDEN

### Early Spring (early March to mid April)

- Prune
  - ✓ summer-flowering trees and shrubs (flowers grow on new growth)
  - ✓ non-blooming broadleaf evergreens, evergreen or deciduous hedge-type plants
  - ✓ roses: hybrid tea, floribunda, grandiflora, mini
- Remove from any plant winter damage that may have occurred to plant

### Late Spring or Early Summer (late April to early June)

- Prune
  - ✓ Spring flowering shrubs and trees immediately after blooms fade
- Pinch or trim
  - ✓ One half of new candles on needed evergreens

### Summer (mid-June to late August)

- Shear
  - ✓ hedge-type plants
- Prune
  - ✓ dogwoods, maples, walnuts, yellow woods if needed

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- ✓ summer-flowering shrubs and trees as blooms fade (flowers grow on old growth)

## Autumn (September to mid-December)

- Thin
  - ✓ shrubs and trees as needed (any other pruning may result in new growth that won't harden off before winter)
- Remove
  - ✓ any dead branches from trees and shrubs as needed

## Winter (late December to late February)

- Prune
  - ✓ Deciduous trees that don't bloom in the spring or summer—make sure the temperature is over 20°F!

### ADDITIONAL NOTES

- **NEVER TOP A TREE!** The resulting shoots are weakly attached and the large wounds inflicted on the tree make it vulnerable to decay, insect attack and disease. Sawing a tree's top limbs off is a short-term solution with potentially very dangerous results.
- **BEFORE** you make any cuts, should you have pruning questions *please* call or come in to your neighborhood Dennis' Seven Dees garden center.
- Many user-friendly books have been written on the subject of pruning. Check your local library or book store for resources you can have by your side during your project. Pruning can be a very relaxing activity that contributes to the over-all health of shrubs and trees in your landscape.