

Shrub Pruning

Proper pruning is important for the shrubs in your landscape. Shrubs display their best characteristics when pruned regularly and correctly. The objectives in pruning shrubs are to maintain desired size, maintain desired appearance (natural or formal), maximize flowering potential, and promote ability to naturally regenerate.

- Every pruning cut should be made with the plant's health in mind.
- Improper pruning cuts lead to disease and decay.
- Shearing injures shrubs and can cause them to die prematurely.

Shrubs can be classified by these two growing characteristics: Cane growth and tree-like growth.

Cane growing shrubs generate from new shoots (canes) at the base of the plant.

Tree-like shrubs grow with a branching structure that persists through the lifetime of the shrub.

Cane Shrubs:

- Potentilla
- Weigela
- Viburnum
- Dogwood

Tree-Like Shrubs:

- Arborvitae
- Euonymus
- Junipers
- Rhododendron
- Nannyberry
- Lilac
- Pagoda Dogwood

Types of Shrub Pruning

1) Renewal pruning

The best approach to keep shrubs healthy and attractive involves removing from one-fourth to one-third of the oldest stems at the base of the shrubs. This process of selective thinning allows the shrub to maintain a natural and distinctive shape. It also allows sunlight to reach the base of the shrub, which stimulates the growth of new canes.

2) Rejuvenation pruning

Some shrubs benefit from periodic rejuvenation pruning where they are cut to the ground, then begin new growth the following season. Although this measure seems drastic, the results can be pleasing and dramatic.

Cane Shrubs



Potentilla

Dogwood

Tree-Like Shrubs



Arborvitae

Nannyberry



Renewal pruning

3) Selective pruning

Shrubs have a natural form that can be accentuated and maintained through selective thinning and reduction. Cuts are made at branch collars to make the best use of the shrubs built-in protective tissues.

4) Shearing

Shearing is a very detrimental practice. It has been used to give shrubs a formal appearance and to control their height. Shearing causes the unnecessary death of healthy shoots. Cuts are made without regard to the location of natural protective zones in the plant. These improper cuts become an entry point for disease and decay.

Shearing removes only the upper and exterior portions of a shrub. The dead, dying and over-mature stems are left in the interior, crowding out and preventing the regeneration of new shoots at the base of the shrub.

Proper pruning will enhance the appearance and health of your shrubs. To determine the appropriate time and pruning style for each species, please consult with your certified arborist. They are your best source of accurate information in maintaining the health, form and function of your landscape plants.

An Integrated Approach

When caring for urban trees it is important to make a complete evaluation of all environmental conditions to accurately diagnose all stress factors and prescribe care based on specific circumstances. This prescriptive care will help your tree meet its full potential.



Selective pruning