

Pruning

CARE GUIDE



Pruning at the right time with the right tools and making the right cuts, will make this essential gardening task so much easier.

PRUNE WITH A PURPOSE

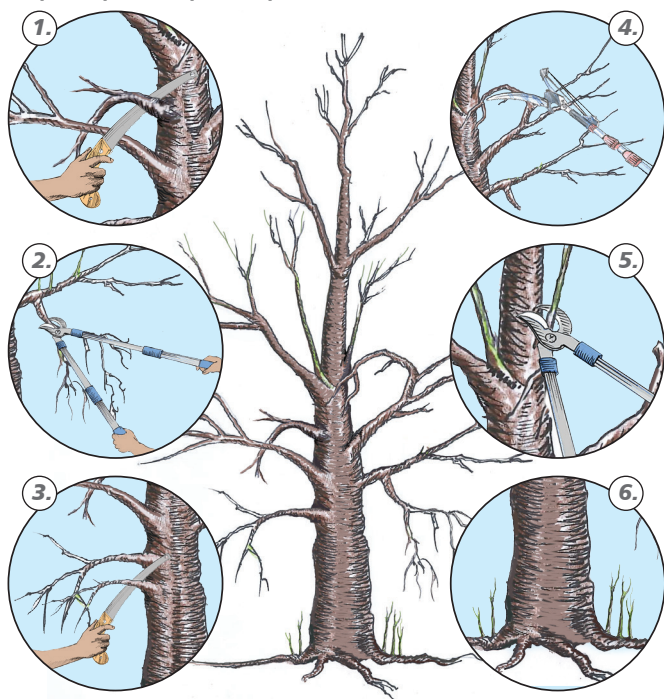
Before starting, determine exactly why you want to prune a particular plant – this will help you to decide which parts to prune.

Do you want to:

- *form the early shape of a young plant,*
- *maintain the shape and habits of mature plants,*
- *restrict the plant to a specific height or width eg. hedges,*
- *encourage new plant growth,*
- *shape a plant decoratively, eg. topiaries,*
- *improve flowering and fruiting,*
- *dispose of damaged or unwanted growth?*

PRUNING STEP-BY-STEP

Pruning will vary from plant to plant, but the following basic steps help to keep it simple:



- 1. Remove the 4D's, i.e. *dead, dying, damaged or diseased* growth.**
- 2. Cut out weak, scraggly and overcrowded growth.**
- 3. Remove stems and branches that are crossing and rubbing against another.**
- 4. Remove branches that are reverting back to the plant.**
- 5. Remove limbs that are growing at too small an angle (less than 45°) to the trunk and limbs that are too close together.**
- 6. Remove all water sprouts and suckers from branches & roots.**

THE RIGHT TIME TO PRUNE

Damaged or diseased growth as well as root sucker and water shoots should be removed immediately.

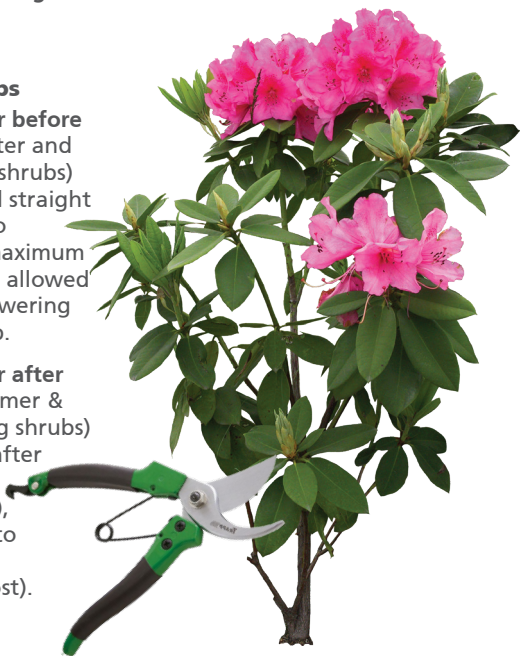
Maintenance pruning can be done as follows:

1. SHRUBS

Flowering shrubs

Those that **flower before midsummer** (winter and spring flowering shrubs) should be pruned straight after flowering to ensure that the maximum amount of time is allowed for next year's flowering shoots to develop.

Those that **flower after midsummer** (summer & autumn flowering shrubs) must be pruned after flowering in late autumn (if hardy), or in late winter to early spring, (if sensitive to frost).



Shrubs grown for their foliage



- **Deciduous:** Prune in winter when they are dormant. Shape anytime of the year.
- **Evergreen:** Prune in early spring just before new growth starts. Trim and shape throughout the year.
- **Clipped hedges:** Cut back in late autumn or early spring to promote new growth. Maintain the shape by shearing new growth regularly throughout the growing season until early autumn.
- **Roses:** Prune from mid-July until the first week in August. They can be shaped and lightly pruned again in January for another flush of flowers.

2. TREES

Prune in winter when dormant.

3. FRUIT TREES and VINES



- **Deciduous fruit trees and bushes:** Prune in winter during their dormant season.
- **Citrus trees:** Only cut out dead branches and overgrowth. Remove a few of the lower branches on the young tree to encourage growth into a standard.
- **Grapes** should be pruned quite strongly close to the lateral shoots during their dormant season in winter.

4. BERRIES:



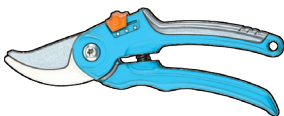
Prune in late autumn just after fruiting.

- **Berry bushes** (eg. blueberries and gooseberries): Cut stems older than 3 years and unproductive stems off at ground level.
- **Cane berries** (eg. Raspberries and blackberries): Remove all 2nd year canes that have finished bearing fruit. They won't bear fruit again.

THE RIGHT TOOLS

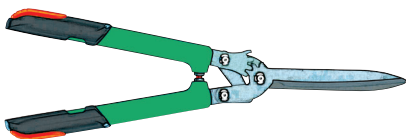


Thick gardening gloves will protect your hands against sharp thorns and branches.



Secateurs

Use for pruning flowers, vines and thinner shoots and branches (**up to 25mm Ø**) on shrubs and trees. Bypass secateurs are preferable as the blades move past each other and won't bruise soft tissue.



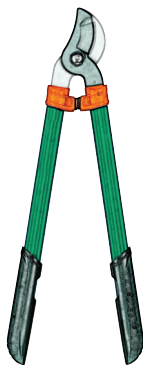
Hedge shears / clippers

Used to cut back and shape smaller shrubs, hedges and perennials and can cut through stems **up to 45mm**.



Pruning saws

A strong, sharp saw is needed for precision cutting through branches **up to 120mm Ø**.



Loppers

Loppers have thicker blades and longer handles and are used for cutting branches **up to 50mm Ø**.



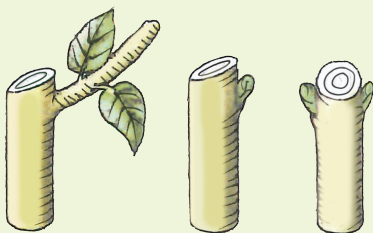
Branch pruners / Pole pruners

These pruners are attached to a pole that can extend up to 2.5m high. This enables you to cut tree branches **up to 45mm** thick without having to use a ladder.

TOOL CARE:

Keep blades clean and sharp at all times. After each pruning, dip the blades in a strong disinfectant to sterilise. Rinse in clean water and dry thoroughly. Wipe with an oily cloth and oil the springs and hinges to prevent rust. Store in a dry place.

THE RIGHT CUT



- Only use sharp tools to avoid bruising.
- Make a clean cut at a slight angle just above ($\pm 5\text{mm}$) a healthy side shoot, bud or pair of buds.
- Slope the cut away from the bud or shoot.
- Take care not to cut so close that it will damage the bud but not so far that a long, dead stub will remain.
- Consider the direction in which the bud is pointing before cutting as this is the direction in which the new shoot will grow.
- Cut branches just outside the branch collar. Cut large, heavy branches in stages to avoid damage.

AFTERCARE



After pruning, spray the 'wounds' with an insecticide and a fungicide to prevent insect eggs and fungi spores from causing disease.



Fertilise with an organic 2:3:2 around the plant and water well.



Spread a layer of compost or any mulch of your choice around the plant, taking care to keep a small area around the stem free of mulch to avoid fungal infection.

A bit of hard work, yes, but your thankful plants will reward you with bright buds, beautiful blooms, juicy fruit and strong, healthy growth. Happy pruning!



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