

To Prune or Not to Prune? That Is the Question

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PRUNING

IN THE CHURCHYARD



BEFORE



AFTER

MY SECATEURS WERE BLUNT AND MY HEART WAS NOT REALLY IN IT

History

- People have been pruning since the Old Testament - grapes
- Greek and Roman - topiaries
- 13th century in China and Japan - bonsai

now, it's your turn ...

Why should I Prune?

- Remove damaged or dead limbs/stems
- improve plant health,
- control size & shape,
- improve blossoms,
- larger fruit crops, ...

When should I Prune?

“**After** it blooms, it’s time to prune”

Early blooming: Dogwood, azalea, . . . WAIT until after blooming!

Late blooming: Roses, Crape myrtle: late winter, early spring BEFORE new growth begins.

In general; don’t prune in late summer through fall: New growth may get damaged by hard/early frost

When in doubt. Look it up: <https://forsyth.ces.ncsu.edu/2018/01/pruning-trees-shrubs-in-your-landscape/>

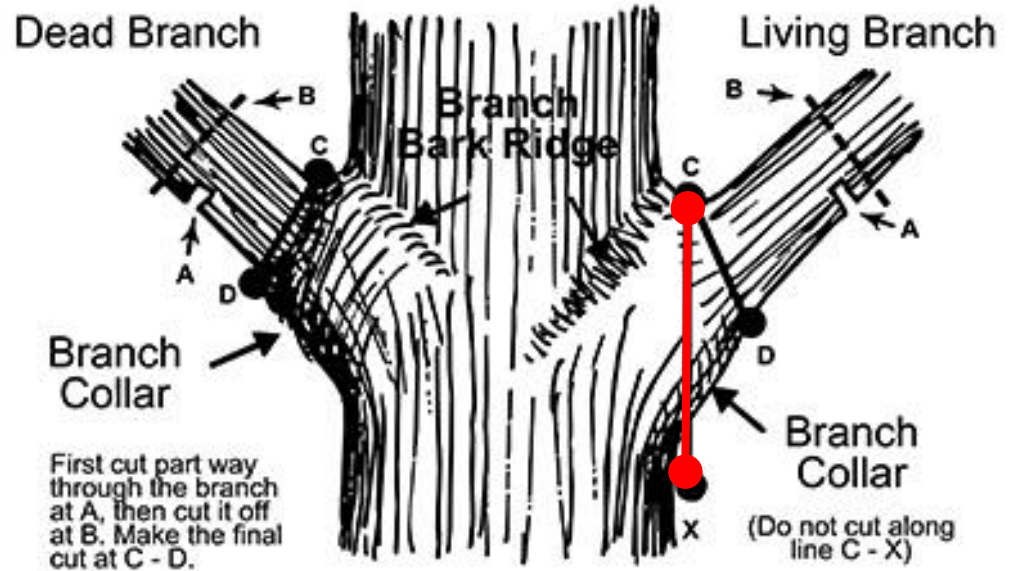
How Should I Prune?

- Start with the three D's: dead, diseased, or damaged.
- Don't remove more than $\frac{1}{3}$.
- Cut back to ABOVE a node or bud.
- If cutting an entire branch, cut just above the branch collar.
- "If they cross, toss."
- Plants are self-healing. No need for glue, tar, or other "healing" application

How Should I Prune?

Cut above branch collar

Parallel to collar



How Should I Prune? Heading Cut

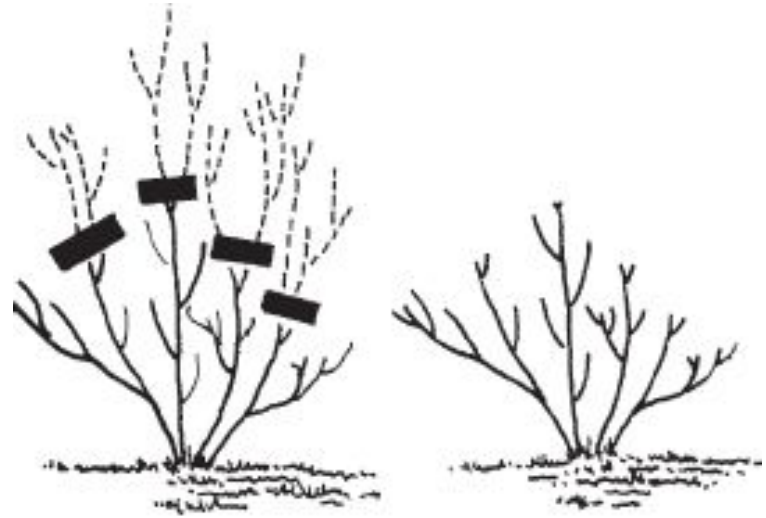
To lower height, use a Heading cut
Growth will occur at ends of branches
Shearing off terminal buds at tips -
causes many new shoots to form



How Should I Prune? Heading Back

To lower height, use a heading cut

Growth will occur at ends of branches



Before

After

Heading Back

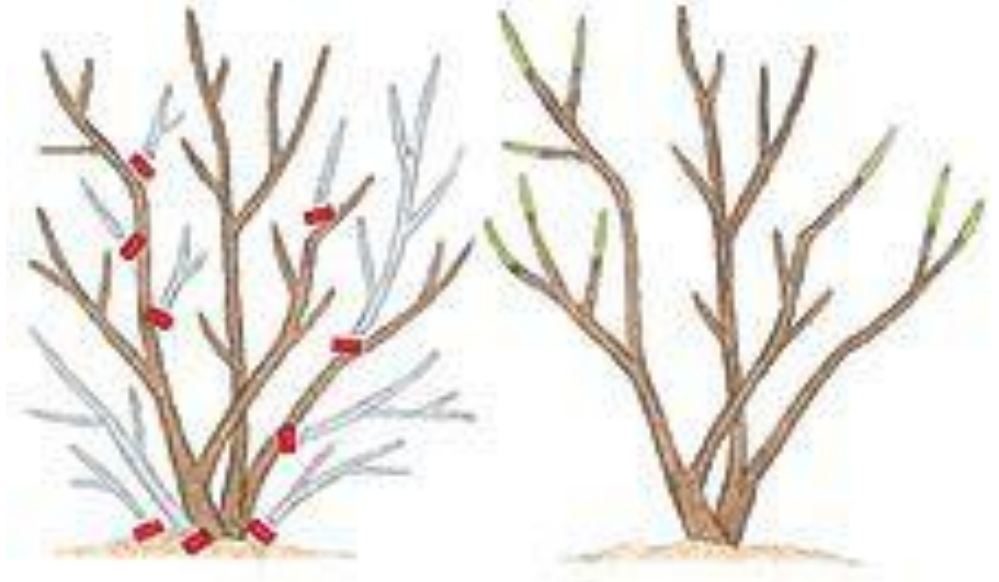
How Should I Prune?

Thinning Cut

Thinning allows more:

Sun, air to reach plant

Growth further down the branch



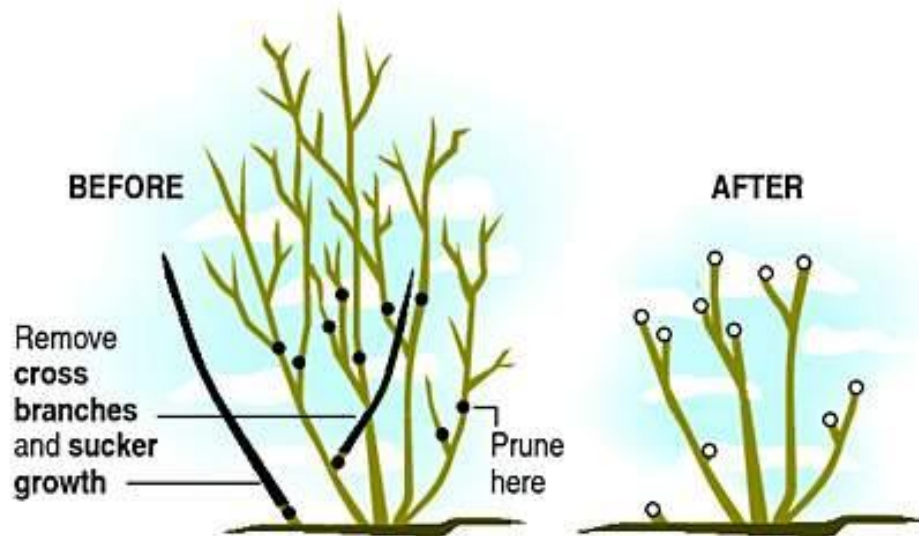
How to Prune - Roses

Minor pruning in Dec. to lower height to 3'.

In spring, once new buds are $\frac{1}{4}$ ", major pruning.

Remove dead and crossing branches.

Leave a few healthy, young branches.



How to Prune - Roses



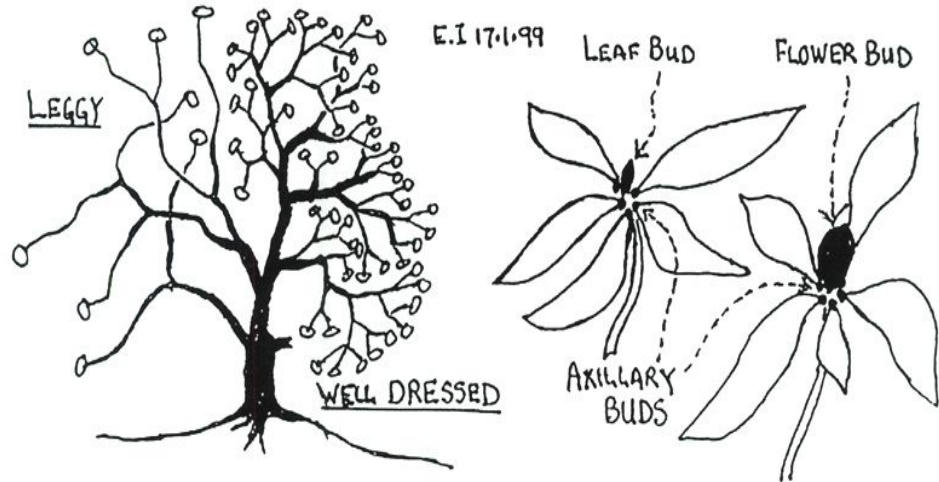
How to Prune - Azaleas

Remove dead and crossing branches anytime.

Postpone major pruning until after blooming.

If too leggy, prune back healthy branches by 20%.

Use thinning cuts to get more sun and air. Branching and blooming will occur lower on stems.



How to Prune - Crepe Myrtle

Not pruning is an acceptable option.

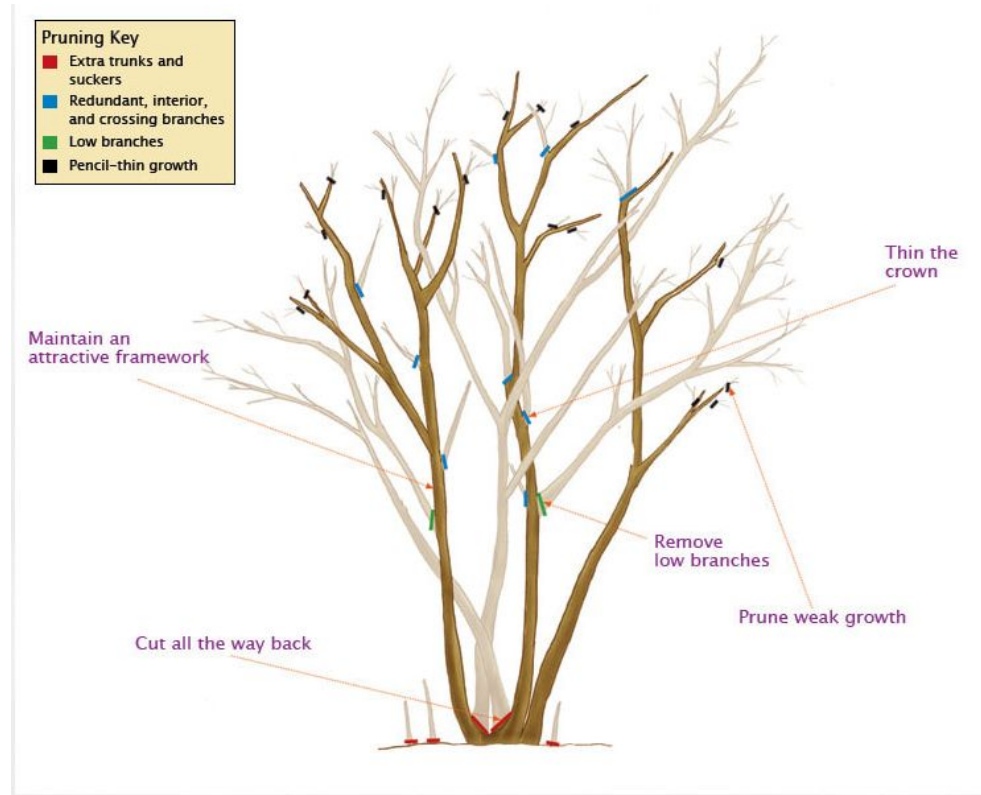
Remove dead, damaged branches anytime.

In mid-Jan to Feb, major pruning.

Remove crossing branches.

Thinning cuts work best.

However,



How to Prune - Crepe Myrtle

However,

What If your plant is TOO
BIG!



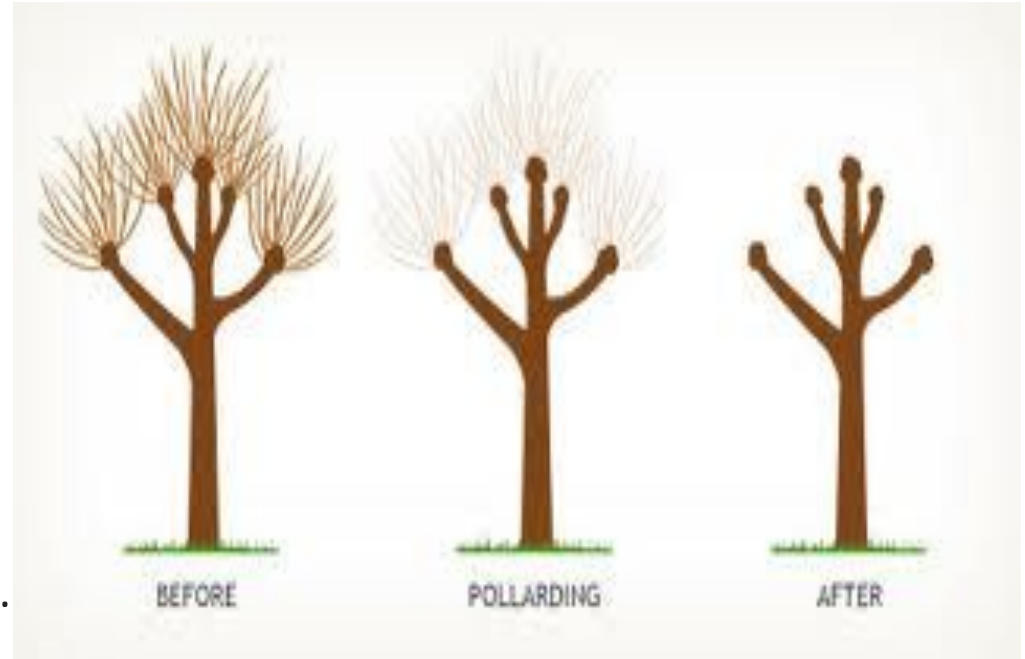
How to Prune - Crepe Myrtle

If your plant is TOO BIG!

Remove it ... or Pollard

Pollarding is a European pruning technique dating back to medieval times.

It involves removal of the upper branches of a tree and is used to maintain trees at a determined height.



How to Prune - Hydrangea

Blooms on old wood: Blooming starts early summer and peters out by midsummer. Next year's flower buds form in late summer or early fall. To reduce the risk of removing these buds, prune **just as** the flowers begin to fade.

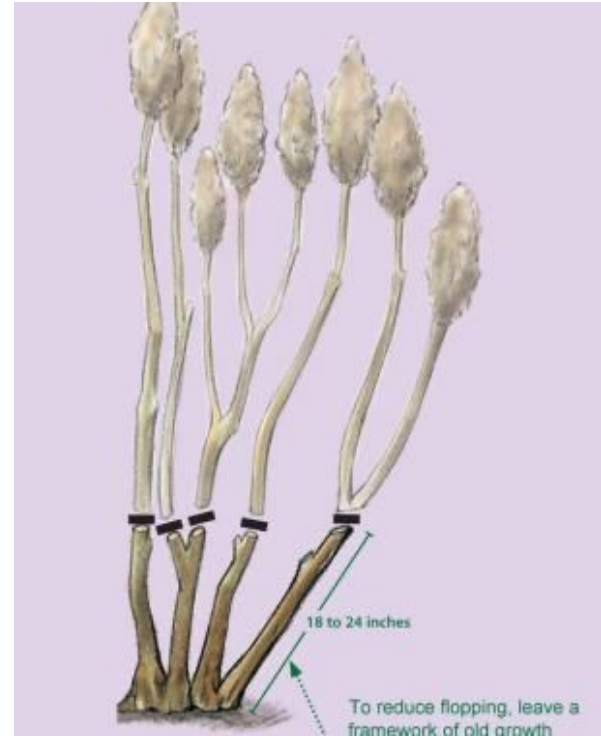
The earlier you get it done after bloom, the quicker the shrub can recover, producing more and larger blooms next season.



How to Prune - Hydrangea

Blooms on new wood: They grow and set buds the same year that they bloom, shrubs that flower on new wood generally start blossoming later, beginning in midsummer and continuing until the first frost.

In late winter or early spring, these shrubs can be cut all the way back to the ground.



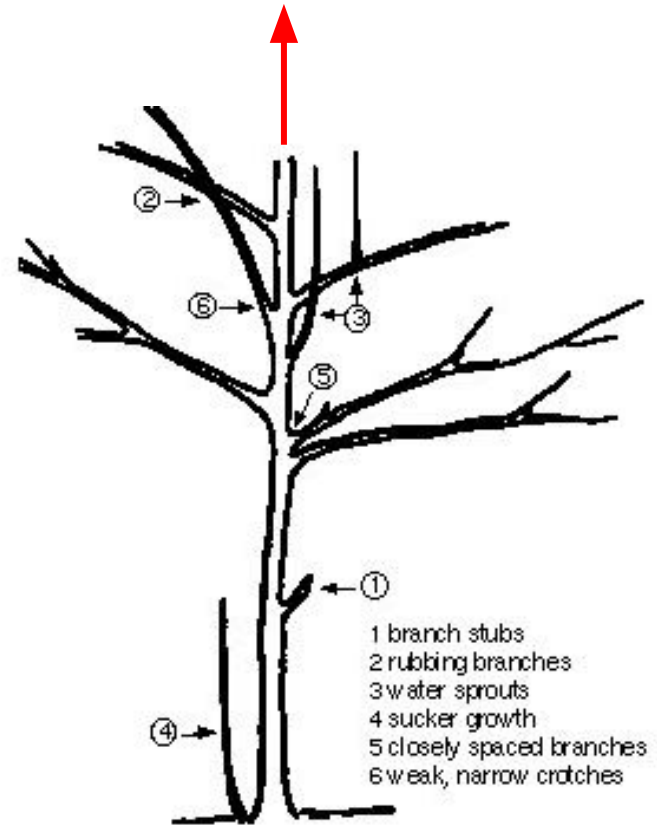
How to Prune - Small Trees

Preserve a central leader....eliminate competition.

Or not ... to keep the tree small. Ex. fruit

Don't forget the three D's: dead, diseased, or damaged.

Thin to allow more sunlight, air into the middle.



Tools of the Trade

Gloves



Protective eyewear



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Loppers



Hand pruners - use bypass!



Saw



File



Questions?

