

# Spring Pruning

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Bright Leaf Landscaping

## Why?

- Dormant
- Easy to see structure
- Allows for filling in with spring's growth

## Why Not?

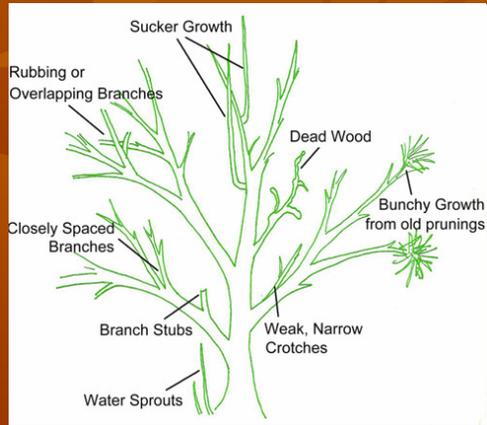
- Winter pruning of spring flowering plants may reduce floral display
  - Though display may be hindered, harsh pruning should still be done while plants are dormant

## Pruning Basics

- Plan your cuts
- If you are unfamiliar with the plant, LOOK IT UP!!
- Tools
- Making cuts

## Planning Your Cuts

- Decide your desired effect
- Identify undesirable/unhealthy growth
  - Branches that cross and rub
  - Multiple leaders
  - Suckering
- Weigh your options



## Look It Up

- If you are unfamiliar with a particular plants, growth habit, proper pruning time, or the appropriate pruning method, look it up
- Possible sources include:
  - Internet (just Google the plant name)
  - If possible be area specific
  - Reference books
  - Cooperative extension

## Tools and Uses

- Only use sharp pruning tools
- Bypass shears (never use anvil type shears for pruning)
  - Small branches up to ½ in
- Loppers
  - Larger branches up to 1 ½ in
- Folding saw
  - Cuts on pull motion
  - Larger branches up to 2 ½ in

## Tools and Uses, Cont.

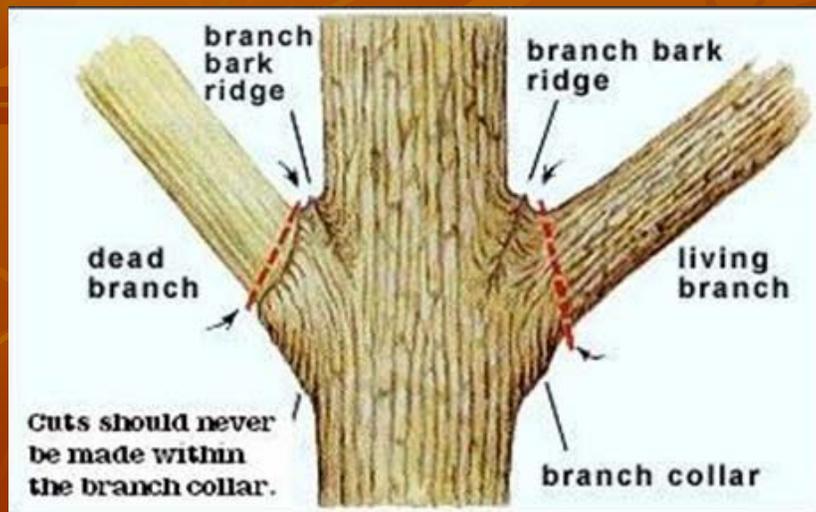
- Larger saws
  - Cut on pull motion
  - Limb removal
- Pole saws and shears
  - For use on out of reach branches
  - Do not use around power lines
  - Use eye protection
  - Beware of falling material



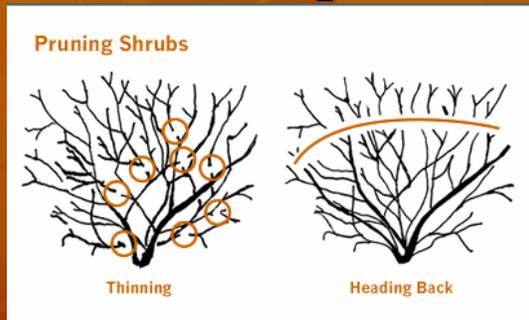
## Making Cuts

- Cuts should always be made at a node or crotch
- When using loppers or shears, make sure that cuts are made with the blade closest to the plant
- When using a saw, support the branch being cut or make relief cuts to prevent tearing of the bark
- Remove branches that cross or rub
- Remove any shoots pointing straight up or down
- Identify the collar and do not violate it
- Do not paint cuts

## Making Cuts - Continued



# Techniques



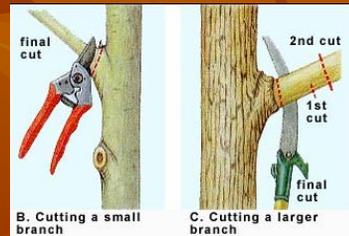
- Heading back/ tip pruning
  - Thinning
  - Renewal
  - Rejuvenation

## Heading Back

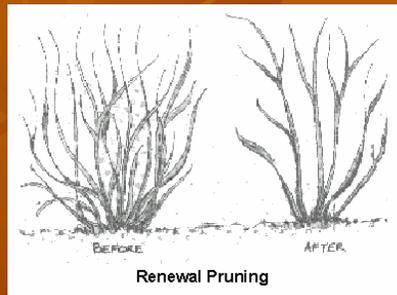
- Sometimes called tip pruning
  - Cutting off ends of branches
  - Cuts always made at nodes or leaf axils
  - Cuts should be staggered
  - Cuts should be made at outward pointing buds
  - Encourages new growth

## Thinning

- Removal of undesirable limbs and branches back to the main trunk
  - Dead wood
  - Injured material
  - Material selected to create space
- Larger limbs should be removed with 3 cuts
  - 1<sup>st</sup> cut upward 12" out
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> cut downward 16" in out
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> cut downward just beyond collar



## Renewal



- Removal of older stems
- Used on multi-stem shrubs
- Typically 1/3<sup>rd</sup> each year
- Results in total removal of old growth every 3 years

## Rejuvenation

- Used to drastically reduce a plant's size
- Generally used on broad leaf shrubs
- Removal of all branches to 6-12 in or less
- Late winter to early spring before flush
- Plants grow vigorously by mid summer and can be tip pruned to encourage lateral branching

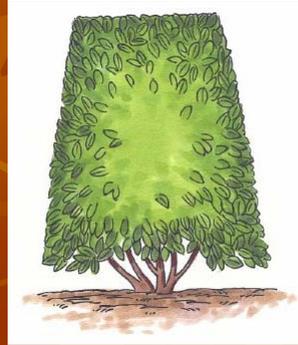


## Factors to be Aware of

- Light
- Air flow
- Fruit and flowers
- Preventing rotting and infection
- Sanitation of tools

## Light

- Prune “holes” in dense shrubs hedges
  - Prevents interior from dying back
  - Allows new growth from center
- Prune so that top is not wider than bottom
  - Prevents bottom dieback due to shade



## Light



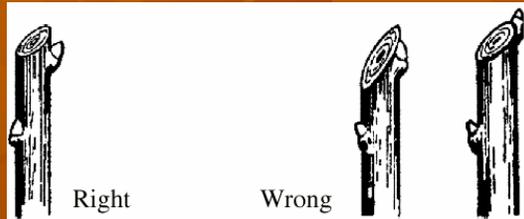
## Air flow

- Prune to allow good air circulation especially in tight groupings
  - Helps prevent fungal and bacterial disease and some pests
  - May be necessary to remove entire plants from a tightly planted group

## Fruit and Flowers

- Weight of fruit and flowers
  - May cause branches to rub
  - Narrow crotches to crack (fruit)
  - Thin stems bend resulting in poor display (often seen with roses)

## Preventing Rotting and Infection



- Make cuts within 1/8-1/4 in from node or collar
- Angle cuts to shed water
- Make clean cuts with sharp clean tools
- Be careful not to wound other parts of the plant while pruning
- Remove clippings from vicinity of plant

## Sanitation of Tools

- Sanitize tools to prevent spread of infection
  - 10% bleach solution (tends to cause corrosion)
  - Ethyl/grain alcohol (70% or greater)

## Tips

- Don't cut more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup>
- Use multiple passes
- Fewer but more aggressive cuts (look before you leap)
- Avoid hedge clippers
- Learn to walk away



## Avoid Excess Pruning through good Design

