



## Pruning Guide

Pruning enhances the natural shape of plants by evening out areas that have grown faster than others. Pruning should also be used to remove dead or damaged wood or to train plants to a desired shape. The following guidelines will help keep your plants healthy and looking their best.

### **Trees and Shrubs**

- Whenever possible, remove branches where they meet the trunk when pruning trees. We do not recommend the use of a pruning sealer. It is best to let the tree heal naturally.
- Spring blooming deciduous shrubs, such as forsythia, lilacs, crabapples, and viburnum should be pruned immediately after flowering. Summer blooming and other deciduous shrubs should be pruned in late winter or early spring, before new growth begins. Evergreen shrubs should be pruned after the new growth has hardened off in late spring or early summer (before July 4<sup>th</sup>). The best time to prune deciduous trees is late winter to early spring, before they have leafed out. For information of when to prune hydrangeas, please ask for a copy of our Hydrangea Guide.
- Dead wood can be pruned from trees and shrubs at any time. Branches will appear brown and dry when scratched with a fingernail or knife. Stems that are green and supple are still alive.
- Remove branches which cross or rub together, which can lead to damage of one or both branches. Remove the least desirable branch. Some species, such as Serviceberries, are prone to having numerous branches that cross. Be careful not to remove too many branches at one time which can harm the plant. As a general rule, do not remove more than one third of the plant per year.

### **Perennials**

- Deadhead (remove spent blooms as they fade) to encourage re-blooming and keep the garden looking neat.
- Cut back leggy (stretched) plants by one third to encourage new growth and extend the life of your perennials during the late summer.

### **Shrub Roses**

- Prune in late winter or early spring before shrubs leaf out. Remove dead or damaged branches and prune to shape if desired. Shrub roses may be pruned back at this time if you would like to keep them to a certain height. These plants also respond well to renewal pruning. Cut back one third of the oldest branches to the ground every 3 years to encourage new growth.
- Shrub roses are self-cleaning and do not need to be deadheaded, however, doing so may improve the appearance of your shrub and encourage new growth.

### **Groundcovers**

- Prune groundcovers in early spring so that new growth will quickly cover bare stems. Any winter burn, yellowed or discolored foliage, should also be removed at this time.
- Avoid pruning groundcover in late fall. Groundcover pruned at this time can produce new tender growth which is often damaged by cold temperatures.