

Ornamental Shrub Pruning

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Focus

- Ornamental deciduous shrub pruning
 - Tools
 - Timing to preserve flowers
 - Reinvigorate overgrown shrubs
- Presentation does NOT address
 - Pruning to maximize fruit production
 - Evergreen shrubs



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Why Prune?

- Maintain a healthy structure
- Enhance flowering
- Fight disease
- Rein in an overgrown plant
- Shorten a long branch



Usually not necessary when young



Bypass Pruners

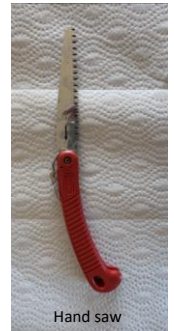
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Loppers

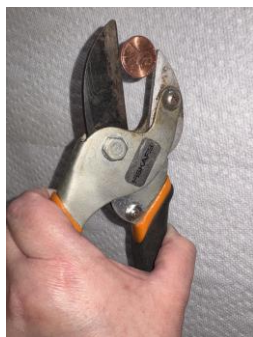
Tools

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Hand saw

Avoid Anvil Pruners



Light corrective pruning can be done anytime

- Remove dead or diseased branches
- Branches that rub
- Suckers
- Branches that create a hazard



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Spring (March/early April) is the best time to prune most deciduous shrubs



What About Flowering Shrubs?

Considerations

- Is your main objective to avoid cutting off flower buds?
- Need to know when the buds are formed
- Bloom on old wood
- Bloom on new wood



'Sensation' lilac



Shrubs that flower on old wood

- Spring-flowering shrubs
- Flower buds formed in late summer/early fall
- Flower buds dormant over the winter
- Bloom in spring



Spring Flowering Shrubs/Bloom on Old Wood

- Chokeberry (*Aronia*)
- Forsythia
- Honeysuckle (*Lonicera*)
- Lilac (*Syringa*)
- Magnolia
- Mockorange (*Philadelphus*)
- Ninebark (*Physocarpus*)
- Pearlbush (*Exorchoroda*)
- Peashrub (*Caragana arborescens*)
- Purple leaf sandcherry (*Prunus x cistena*)
- Serviceberry (*Amelanchier*)
- Spirea (*Spiraea prunifolia*, *S. x vanhouttei*, *S. betulifolia*, *S. nipponica*)
- Viburnums



Spring Flowering Shrubs

- If blooms before June 15th, blooms on old wood
- Pruning in dormant season will remove flower buds
- Small to moderate amount of pruning: after done blooming
- Pruning off spent flowers
- Heavy pruning: March/April



Summer Flowering Shrubs: New Wood

- Best to prune in March/early April
- Dwarf bush honeysuckle (*Diervilla* spp.)
- Potentilla
- Panicle hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata*)
- Smooth hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*)
- Summer blooming spireas: *Spiraea japonica*, *S. x bumalda*



Shrubs Grown for Foliage

- Prune in late winter/early spring
- Alpine currant
- Barberries
- Burning bush
- Dogwood



What NOT to Do

- Repeated shearing cuts are detrimental to most shrub spp.
- Stimulates dense growth 6-8" beneath the cut
- Shades out lower branches



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Renewal Pruning of Overgrown Shrubs



Figure 7. Sequences of renewal pruning during a three- to four-year period. This would minimize loss in flower display.

Can remove up to 1/3 of stems

NDSU Publication H1036
Basic Guidelines for Pruning Trees and Shrubs

Renewal Pruning (Thinning)

- Alpine currant
- **Barberries**
- Chokeberries
- Cotoneaster
- **Dogwood** (red stems)
- Elderberry
- Flowering almond
- **Forsythia** (flowering)
- Honeysuckle
- **Lilac** (common)
- Mockorange
- Ninebark
- Potentilla
- Privet
- Smokebush
- Smooth hydrangea
- Snowberry
- Spring blooming spirea
- Summer blooming spirea
- **Viburnum**
- Weigela
- Willows

Rejuvenation Pruning Back to 4-10"

- Prune all stems near ground level
- Late winter (will lose flowers)
- Doesn't work for stressed plants
- Shrubs that will tolerate
 - Red twigged dogwood
 - Forsythia
 - Honeysuckle
 - Lilac (common)
 - Spirea
 - Potentilla
 - Cotoneaster
 - Ninebark



<https://yardandgarden.extension.ksu.edu/how-to/pruning-large-overgrown-shrubs>

Hydrangea Pruning

- *Hydrangea macrophylla* (bigleaf hydrangea)
 - Blooms on new and old wood
 - Hardiness issues
 - Only remove dead stems in late winter
- *Hydrangea arborescens* (smooth hydrangea)
 - 'Annabelle' and 'Incrediball'
 - Blooms on new wood
 - Tolerates pruning to the ground in late March or early April
 - For stronger stems: Cut back to second set of live buds



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- *Hydrangea paniculata* (panicle hydrangea)
 - Blooms on new wood; spring pruning
 - Don't prune to the ground!
 - Remove dead branches and spent flowers in early spring (Strategy 1 for larger plant)
 - Remove or thin oldest branches each year (Strategy 2 for renewal)



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