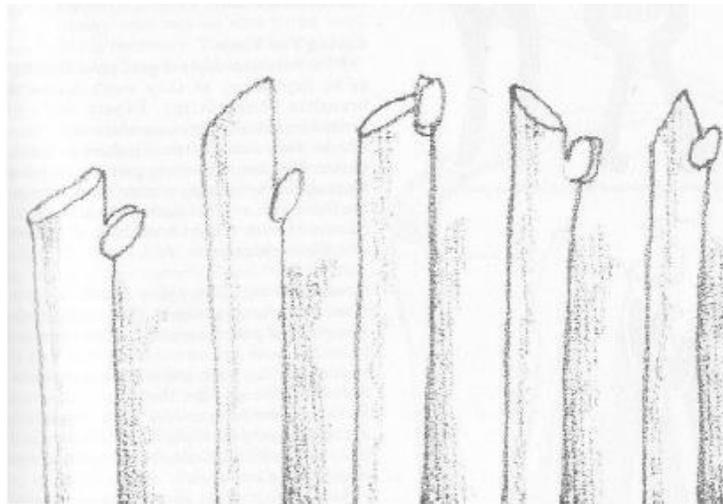


Basic Pruning

Pruning done at the right time and in the right way actually helps shrubs grow by stimulating the movement of nutrients in the plant. It's not done just to make a shrub smaller. It is also done to rejuvenate growth, change the shape, remove dead wood and the risk of pest infestation, stimulate flowering or even reduce flowering and stimulate foliage growth.

Pruning Terminology to Know

Heading back is cutting branches back to within one-quarter inch of a bud. This technique produces a bushier appearance as the shrub fills out. Cuts should be made at a 45 degree angle away from the bud, at one-quarter inch above bud. The correct cut in this diagram is the one on the far left.



Thinning is the complete removal of branches to their source (another stem, a trunk or the ground). Thinning gives a shrub a more open appearance, lets light into the inner part of the shrub and stimulates growth throughout the plant. Shrubs that look fine on the outside but are completely woody inside need thinning.

Shaping combines heading and thinning to give a shrub a certain shape and size. It is most often used to maintain size. Basic pruning techniques are used for shaping, but each shrub is somewhat different depending on how the particular shrub should grow.

Shearing refers to cutting back branches around the outside of a shrub, usually with clippers, to keep the plant in form. It is an important technique for keeping hedges and other shrubs neat looking, but when done repeatedly without also thinning, it contributes to dead wood in the center of the shrub.

Pinching back is a technique used to keep plants and shrubs bushy by removing the terminal (or tip) bud on the plant. It is used for shrubs and for other plants like chrysanthemums, in order to produce a bushy plant with many blooms. Pinching requires no tools other than fingers.

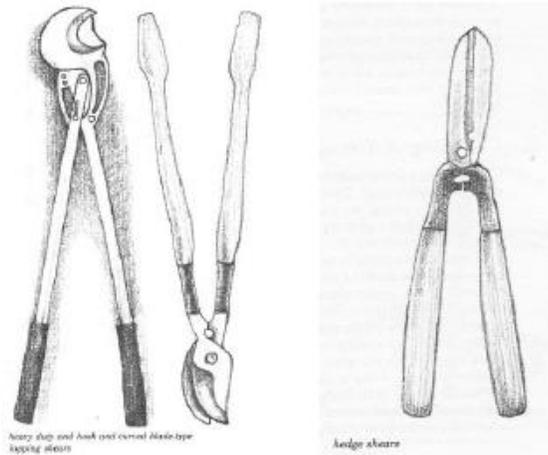
Basic Pruning

Tools for pruning

Four tools are essential for pruning. All of them should be kept sharp and clean to ensure clean cuts and prevent the spread of diseases from one shrub to another. When selecting pruning tools, buy the best that you can afford. We have steel pruning tools made by quality manufacturers.

Hand pruners come in both straight and hooked styles. When in prime condition, hook and blade shears will make the closest and cleanest cuts.

Lopping shears are used for cutting larger branches, branches above your reach, or branches on the inside of a shrub. A good pair will cut branches up to 1 ¼ inches thick.



Pruning shears are like big scissors, and are used to shear shrubs or hedges.

Pruning saws are used for cutting heavier branches, or branches in the center of a dense shrub that you cannot reach with the loppers without damaging other branches.

