



Pruning Basics

1. Make sure tools are sharp.
2. Disinfect tools with denatured alcohol or 10% bleach – between cuts on diseased plants and between pruning plants.

WHY Prune

Health	Prevent or remedy disease, provide more light and air, remove crossing branches to prevent rubbing where disease could enter
Form Shaping	Topiary, vase shape, single leader, pleaching (braiding)
Plant Growing Too Large	Difficult to reach fruit, start with dwarfing rootstock – pruning standard rootstock preferred
Improve Quality	Provide more energy to remaining fruit and flowers, reduce tendency for alternate bearing of fruit, increase light into total plant
Structural Correction	Lowest limb desired, heading back to limit height, branch distribution, wide angle of crotch, start training young plant if possible

WHEN to Prune

Winter	Encourages growth, stored energy has fewer places to go, lowers number of fruiting buds
Summer	Lessens energy stored, so reduces growth, lets in more light
When Plants Show Disease	Remove infected area as soon as discovered, be sure to sterilize between cuts to ensure new pathogens are not transferred to uninfected areas
Pinching Back	Increases growth response, which is inhibited by auxin at tip of branch. Pinching back the apical bud forces lower (latent) buds to respond

TOOLS

For limbs greater than 1" in diameter	Saw (bow saw, folding saw, pole saw, power saw for stumping)
For limbs between ¼" and 1"	Long-handled loppers
For limbs less than ¼"	Bypass (preferred) or anvil (tends to crush soft tissue) hand pruners
To pinch back tips	Thumbnail

HOW to Prune

Large Branches	Cut under limb 12" from branch about 1/3 through, second cut 1" above first cut (these cuts keep the bark from tearing back), final cut next to main limb just out from bark ridge, parallel to ridge. Do not coat wound; let it air dry.
To Reduce Height (Heading)	Cut at an angle halfway between bark ridge of the limb to be saved and perpendicular to the branch to be removed.
To Remove Side Branch	Cut just beyond ridge
To Cut Back a Stem	Cut about ¼" above bud at a slant, choose bud for direction of new growth

Advice to grow by . . . ask us.

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