

Prune Like a Pro

Pruning, like any other skill, requires knowing what you are doing to achieve success. The old idea that anyone with a chain saw or a pruning saw can be a landscape pruner is far from the truth. It is done to supply additional energy for the development of flowers, fruits, and limbs that remain on the plant.

Reasons to Prune

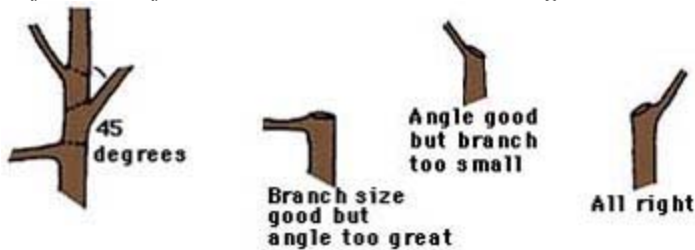
- To train the plant
- To maintain plant health
- To improve the quality of flowers, fruit, foliage or stems To -restrict growth

When to Prune

In general, the best time to prune most plants is during late winter or early spring before growth begins. Contrary to popular belief, pruning at the wrong time of the year does not kill plants, but continual improper pruning results in damaged or weakened plants. You should never prune right after new growth appears.

Prune Correctly

To encourage rapid healing of wounds, make all cuts clean and smooth. This requires good, sharp pruning equipment. Do not leave stubs since they are usually where die back occurs. Avoid tearing the bark when removing large branches.



Pruning of Cape Myrtle

PROPER METHOD



This plant, pictured before pruning, needs to have all weak and dead stems removed.

IMPROPER METHOD



Cutting at the dotted line is the usual course taken by those who prune shrubs.



Same shrub after removal of weak and interfering wood and base sucker growth.



The same plant after bad pruning, as indicated above. The sucker growth remains.



Results of proper pruning are graceful, vigorous growth with distinctive shape.



Results: the lovely natural shape of the shrub is lost, and bloom will be sparse.