Making The Cut:
pruning to maximize plant health and
achieve aesthetic desires

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Agenda

1. **Why, What, & When**
   
   ...do we prune?

2. **Live Demonstration**
   
   Pruning safety, tools, & strategy

3. **Getting Specific**
   
   Common Hydrangeas & Roses- how to ID and how to maintain
Why do we prune?

**STRUCTURE**
Ensures healthy form; plant height can be reduced/maintained

**LIGHT CONTROL**
Increases the amount of sunlight that penetrates a particular area/plant

**CLEARANCE/SAFETY**
Reduces hazardous branches/stems that interfere or have the potential to interfere with structures/potential targets

**HEALTH**
Removal of dead, decaying, or diseased stems of plants prevents further decay and allows healthier stems to thrive

**APPEARANCE**
Achieves the desirable look that aligns with the gardener’s aesthetic goals

**FLOWER/FRUIT PRODUCTION**
Reduces or promotes the amount of flower/fruit production in a season
**What can we prune?**

The short answer is... anything that grows!

- **TREES**
  - (Oak, Maple, Pine, Spruce, Linden, Cherry etc.)

- **SHRUBS**
  - (Holly, Osmanthus, Privet, Butterfly Bush, Spirea, Rhododendron, Boxwood, Hydrangea etc.)

- **HERBACEOUS PLANTS**
  - (Russian Sage, Salvia, Roses, Clethra, Begonia, Daylily etc.)

- **GRASSES**
  - (Rushgrass, Switchgrass, Beachgrass, Lovegrass, Fountaingrass Bluestem etc.)
When do we prune?
The short answer is... anytime!

While timing can certainly be instrumental in pruning, we can often achieve the results we want at anytime if we are following proper pruning guidelines.
“Most routine pruning and removal of weak, diseased, undesirable, or dead limbs [stems] can be accomplished at any time with little negative effect on the plant.”

—ISA Arborist’s Certification Guide
How do we prune?
the new gardener’s handbook
Grow a Beautiful & Bountiful Garden
Everything You Need to Know

Daryl Beyers
Instructor Instructor at the New York Botanical Garden

Cass Turnbull’s Guide to Pruning
What, When, Where & How to Prune for a More Beautiful Garden

3rd Edition
Even more pruning advice in three new chapters

From the winner of PlantAmerica: 1 illustrations by Kari Alpert
Figure 1.1 Types of nodes. Always cut to a node. A node is a place where a bud was or is. A. Branch node B. Leaf node C. Bud D. Leaf scar E. Bud scale scar

Plants are categorized by their branching pattern into *alternate*, *opposite*, and *whorled* (see Figure 1.2).

The vast majority of plants are alternate in branching (with branches first to the left and then to the right). Opposite plants (with branches directly opposite one another) are harder to prune because it’s difficult to squeeze the tips of your hand pruners into the “V” to cut so as not to leave a stub to die back. A *stub* is the dead section of branch that occurred when the last person didn’t cut to the node and so the branch died back. If buds or twigs are opposite each other, just cut off straight and as close to the paired side branches as you can (see Figure 1.3).
Figure 1.4 The nonselective heading cut creates bushiness. A. Removing tips B. stimulates dormant buds and C. results in rapid growth of water sprouts.

Figure 1.5 Selective heading cut. A. Original branch B. Parent stem removed, leaving smaller side branch C. New growth continues through remaining existing branch.

Figure 1.6 Thinning cut A. Original branch B. Smaller side branch removed C. Next season’s growth is channeled into remaining limbs.
Common Hydrangeas

in Northeast landscapes

IMAGE: https://www.ftd.com/blog/share/types-of-hydrangeas
Pruning Hydrangeas

Less is more
### When to Prune Different Types of Hydrangeas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Blooms on</th>
<th>When to prune</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bigleaf hydrangea</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Immediately after flowers fade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth hydrangea</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Late winter or early spring before new growth starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peegee hydrangea</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Light pruning in late winter or early spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakleaf hydrangea</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Summer after flowers fade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain hydrangea</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Immediately after flowering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climbing hydrangea</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Winter or early spring, only when necessary to control size</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Common & Popular Roses in Northeast landscapes

Grandiflora roses have large, showy flowers that are produced on long stems, either singly or in clusters of three to five blooms. Their shrubs are generally larger and more upright than Hybrid Teas.

“Known for stocky, rigid shrubbery, and often used in landscaping in public parks and spaces.”

“Have stiff, upright canes that can be manually trained along a support. Produce more flowers when grown horizontally rather than vertically.”

“Known for their long, upright stems, which make them an extremely popular cut flower.”

“Perpetual roses became the most popular rose in the world among gardeners and florists in the nineteenth century. They are known for their lovely scent and ability to repeat bloom.”
Pruning Roses

Less is...possibly not enough
Before you approach your rosebushes with shears, memorize the perfect cut—the one on the left. Make your cuts on 45-degree (approximately) slants, about 1/4 inch above a swelling bud eye. The cut in the middle is too stubby and too far removed from its new eye, and the one on the right cuts too sharply into new growth.
Light pruning demands only the removal of twiggy and dead wood. Although the blossoms that follow will be short-stemmed, they’ll be profuse.

Moderate pruning requires that five to ten canes be left on bushes. Depending on the severity of winter where you garden, canes may be up to 4 feet long or shorter than 1 foot.

Severe pruning leaves fewer canes per bush, often cut down to 1-foot lengths. Gardeners who prune severely expect either trophies at rose shows or a cruel winter.
Comments/Questions?
Thanks!

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