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Pruning: What And How To Prune Like A Pro

Improper pruning can be damaging to your valuable landscape and effect your plants overall health. Pruning is essentially the removal of certain plant parts in an effort to produce a stronger plant.

Along with improving your landscapes overall health, there is the visual appeal of a freshly trimmed landscape. Learning a few simple techniques and what to prune can be the difference between a great landscape and devastated landscape.



What To Prune:

1. Begin by removing all of the dead, broken or diseased material for the plant. These branches should be trimmed all the way back to the trunk, without cutting the collar. Branches may also be trimmed back to a strong lateral branch.
2. The next step in pruning is to trim back branches in an effort to train the plant to grow in a desired way. This can be done to accomplish the preferred visual appeal for your landscape. This often involves trimming lateral branches. It is important however not to totally change a plants natural growth habit. Over time a plant will always try and return to it natural form, therefore choosing a shape close to this form will decrease the need for extensive pruning and improve a plants overall health.
3. Lastly is to remove any weak or narrow crotches that will become a problem over time. It is always important at this stage to take a step back and review what has been pruned. From this vantage point you are better able to assess the overall shape of the plant. If a large amount of material has already been removed, it is best wait a few months and let the plant recover before continuing with pruning.

How To Prune:

For a proper pruning cut, support the branch just below where the fresh cut is to be made, cut at a slant in the direction where you want the new branch to grow. Supporting the branch while cutting it is critical, as a broken branch will become a dead branch with time.

Make a close cut of an unwanted branch in such a way as to leave a short stub. Use caution not to cut too close to the collar, or an unhealthy trunk wound can occur if the collar is disturbed. Trunk wounds can often then create a weak spot for insects and other damaging diseases to enter the tree.

Using a three-cut technique to avoid damage to a tree is best for removing heavy limbs. Cut under the limb first, to help prevent the bark from ripping. Second, cut above and further out to remove the limb. Third step is to remove the stub.

Pinching is another pruning technique that you can do with using your thumb and forefinger away soft new growth. Pinching back is can be done throughout the growing season to avoid future pruning and to redirect growth and increase density.

Proper pruning can be quite tricky, however with a little training, any gardener can prune their landscape and flowers like a pro. Using the correct tools can also greatly increase the desired results.