

Christina A. Pfeiffer presents:

## SUMMER PRUNING of trees, shrubs, and vines

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### Right tools:

- Loppers, hand shears, pole pruners with curved, by-pass blades.
- Hand saws with tri-edge (razor, turbo, Japanese style).
- Start with sharp, clean tools.

### Right cuts:

Different cuts produce different results.

- **Branch removal cuts** are made at the point of attachment: at the branch collar on trees and larger shrubs, or down to the ground when taking out an entire vertical branch on multi-stem shrubs. Don't leave a stub.
- **Reduction cuts** are used to shorten the length of a stem by cutting it down to a sturdy lateral stem that is at least 1/3 the diameter and large enough to serve as a new, shorter leader.
- **Thinning** out dense growth is done with a combination of removal and reduction cuts. Light thinning (enough to allow filtered light to reach interior branches) is done for maintenance pruning. Prune with removal and reduction cuts to maintain the natural growth habit.
- **Heading and tipping cuts** lop the ends off of branches at nodes (near buds) or randomly. The response is dense new growth where the cuts were made. **Shearing** creates multiple heading cuts through stems and leaves. These cuts alter the natural habit growth habit. Heading cuts made low to the ground can be used for radical renovation of some types of shrubs. Heading and tipping cuts are best used for specialized pruning such as hedges, hybrid roses, or radical shrub renovation

### Right time:

Summer pruning has a dwarfing affect. There is generally much less growth response than after winter or spring pruning. Good summer pruning tasks include:

- Grooming and aesthetics
- Removal of watersprouts and suckers
- Removal of reverted stems on variegated or dwarf cultivars
- Managing size
- Follow-up to dormant season rejuvenation pruning of shrubs
- Training young trees

- Maintaining fruit trees
- Roses – grooming repeat bloomers: hybrid teas, floribundas, English roses
- Vines – a must with vigorous types!

What to avoid pruning in summer:

- Drought stressed trees, shrubs, or vines
- Newly planted trees and shrubs
- No renovation or other hard pruning

**Right amount:**

- Keep it light! Remove no more than ¼ of live branches on trees and shrubs.
- It's better to prune a little at a time over the season than a lot all at once.
- No hard rejuvenation pruning!

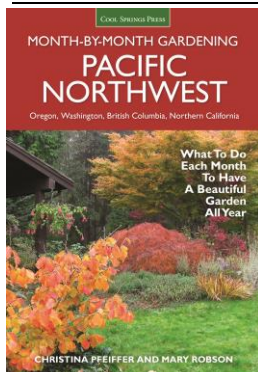
**Summer pruning is about a few well-placed cuts to keep plants in good form with less effort.**

**When you need pruning help, hire a qualified professional:**

- Hire an ISA Certified Arborist® for large tree care and pruning needs.  
See “Find an Arborist” page at [www.pnw-isa.org](http://www.pnw-isa.org)
- Landscape trees with special needs for aesthetics, training, or health care.  
PlantAmnesty Referral Service: [info@plantamnesty.org](mailto:info@plantamnesty.org) or [www.plantamnesty.org](http://www.plantamnesty.org)

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*Pacific Northwest Month-by-Month Gardening* by Christina Pfeiffer with Mary Robson.  
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