



Renewal pruning deciduous shrubs in the landscape

Pruning is a process with a purpose. Because shrubs are expensive to replace, we want them to be healthy, easily maintained, attractive, and possibly functional as barriers or windbreaks.

Pruning deciduous shrubs follows the principle of thinning and renewal. Well-pruned shrubs contain stems of various ages. Before pruning, study the plant to determine its natural form, growth rate, habit of growth, height, spread and time of flowering. When shrubs are thinned, the following responses occur:

- Light is allowed into the center of the shrub, stimulating new shoot development.
- More flowering wood is developed throughout the shrub.
- Total leaf surface area is increased, resulting in a healthier plant.
- Increased air circulation within the shrub discourages certain pests.
- Size and shape of the shrub is easier to control.



A healthy shrub with good balance between its top and roots will produce three or four new shoots each year. If one or two of the oldest stems are removed and one or two of the strongest new shoots are saved, the shrub will renew itself each year with healthy, productive stems.

To rejuvenate a neglected or incorrectly pruned shrub remove 50 percent of the oldest stems at ground level and then make thinning cuts in the remaining middle and top regions of the shrub. The following spring remove another 25 percent of the remaining stems.

By following this process, you can keep your customer's landscape healthy and attractive for many years and make maintaining them easier. So put away that hedger and get out the loppers and hand pruners!



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