



PROJECTS COMPLETED OR UNDERWAY: OLEANDER REJUVENATION

On March 4th group members and others came together to complete round two of the oleander pruning at the front gate. This is a three year project to thin out old growth to prevent shrubs from growing tall and spindly. Eventually they will branch out and create a fuller more inviting entryway into the community.



Hardworking pruning crew:

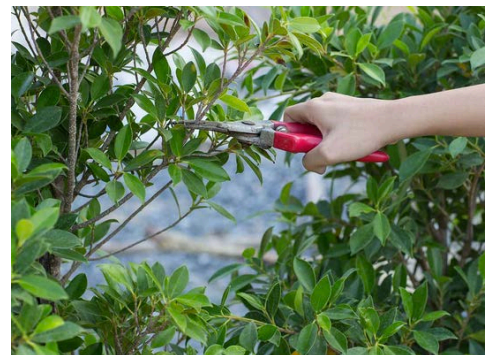
*David Papp
Tom Kucharchik
Scott Whitehead
Thomas Johnson
Catherine Stewart
Kathy Whitehead*

NEIGHBORHOOD TIPS

- **Hummingbirds** have started their migration north and should be spotted soon in South Carolina. Be sure to clean and put out your hummingbird feeders.
- **Sign up for EyeOnWater** through BJWSA and save money and water. Water-use monitoring and leak detection is in the palm of your hand with the free **EyeOnWater** app. Download the app on your smartphone. Use your **customer number** to sign up. You can also sign up at eyeonwater.com.
- **Jeff asked that we remind residents not to put out fertilizer or pesticide in Common Area landscape locations** as that could double the amount of chemical that is applied and harm the landscaping. Also, please do not to blow leaves/grass cuttings, etc. into ditches or swales.

PRUNING SHRUBS AND PLANTS – WHEN AND HOW

There are many benefits to pruning plants. Pruning gives the plant a proper shape and direction, controls unwanted plant growth, increases the number of flowering branches, and removes dead and decaying branches. But even experienced gardeners are unsure about the right time and right way to make cuts, fearing they'll lop off next year's flowers, stunt the plant's growth, or kill it outright.



The first step in successful pruning is **TIMING** and now is a good time to prune most plants and shrubs. Plants that flower in the summer (after May) should be pruned during late winter or early spring since they bloom on new growth. *(There are exceptions such as oak leaf hydrangea and gardenia, which produce blooms on mature wood. Pruning too early removes many of the summer's blooms, so prune immediately after flowering in June.)*

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The second step in pruning success is **PROPER TOOLS**. Every gardener should have hand pruners (to cut branches ½ inch and smaller), pruning loppers (to prune branches between ½ to 1 ½ inch), and a pruning saw (for branches larger than 1 ½ inch). Buy by-pass pruners and loppers which means that one blade “passes by” the other blade. This provides a more precise cut than anvil-type pruners. Blades should be kept sharp and clean. Sterilize the pruners with isopropyl alcohol before and after pruning.

Good quality tools are essential for pruning



Hand pruners

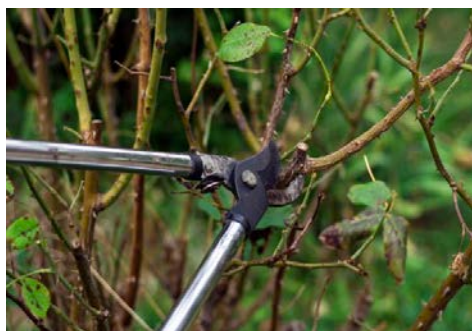


Pruning Loppers

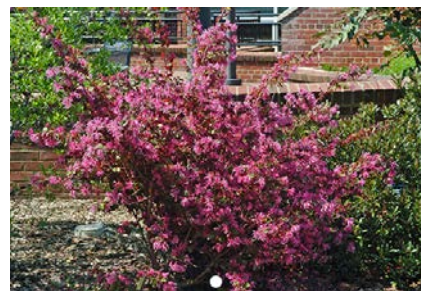


Pruning Saw

A properly pruned shrub is a work of art and beauty and does not look as if it has been pruned. Every plant has a natural shape inherent to the plant. Know your plant and allow it to maintain the natural form, restrict pruning to only structural and emergency pruning. This will produce an attractive and low-maintenance landscape.



Boxwoods and Roses can be pruned now (late winter), Holly too (but give birds time to feed on berries)



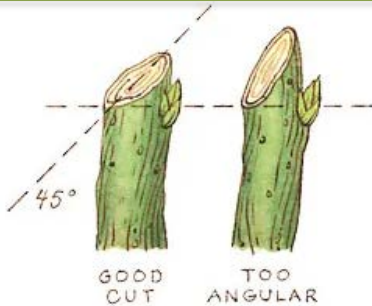
Sweet Viburnum, Azaleas and Loropetalum bloom in late winter. Trim immediately after flowering as needed.

There are four kinds of pruning: pinching, shearing, heading, and thinning. Gardeners commonly "pinch" annuals, using thumb and forefinger, to keep them compact. Shearing is performed on hedges with shears or a power hedger. Our focus in this article is on heading and thinning.

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Pruning Tips*

Begin by getting rid of dead, diseased or injured branches. Remove branches that cross or touch each other and those that look out of place. If the shrub is too dense or large, remove some of the oldest branches.



Make Selective cuts and prune just above the bud at a 45-degree angle, with the lowest point of the cut farthest from the bud. Don't leave more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of growth above the bud, as this can encourage rot. Cutting too low can cause the bud to dry out, and cutting at an angle greater than 45 degrees creates a large surface area that's slow to heal, inviting disease.

Open up the plant with thinning cuts.

Thinning cuts remove whole branches down to the base or take off large sections of branches back to a main stem, allowing light and air to reach the center of the plant encouraging new growth throughout. Remove the thickest, oldest wood first before moving to younger stems.



Thinning Cuts

Use **heading cuts** to spur growth in the right direction on a **lopsided plant**. This will encourage the bud and stem to branch out. It may seem counterintuitive; but you need to prune the shorter side of a lopsided shrub to stimulate growth and even it out. Position pruner on the part of the stem you want to remove, just above a bud that will grow in the direction you want to encourage. Don't remove more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of a stem's overall length in any single cut. For shrubs that are dramatically lopsided, use thinning cuts to remove older wood from the longer side as well as heading cuts on the shorter side.



Heading Cuts

Rejuvenation Pruning



Year 1

Remove one-third of the oldest branches from the base.



Year 2

After pruning, light and air can reach the center of the plant.



Year 2 and 3

Remove another third of the old wood in each of the following years.



Year 3

All the old wood has been removed to make room for vigorous new growth.

For a shrub that has become a **woody mass**, thin out the wood over the course of three years, making room for new growth. Start at the base of the shrub and eliminate the centermost branches, taking out no more than one-third of the shrub's total mass.

New growth from the base should follow the next growing season. Remove another third of the old wood at the base in each of years two and three. By the end of year three, the shrub should be made up of entirely new, vigorous growth.

Do not remove more than one-third of the shrub's branches at any one time. This preserves enough foliage that the plant can make sufficient food (through photosynthesis) to stay robust and generate new growth quickly.

To Sum it Up...

1. Less is more
2. Know what you're pruning
3. Get rid of dead wood
4. Make close cuts – but not too close
5. Remove conflicting cross branches
6. Respect the shrub's natural form
7. Control the size
8. Eliminate a few of the largest, oldest stems
9. Pause and check
10. Cut too much? Most shrubs will grow back and fill in within a year or two.

When in doubt check in with Clemson Extension. For more information about pruning shrubs visit: <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/pruning-shrubs/> or <https://hgic.clemson.edu/hot-topic/the-art-and-science-of-pruning/>
You can always search for your particular plant for specific information in the search box too.