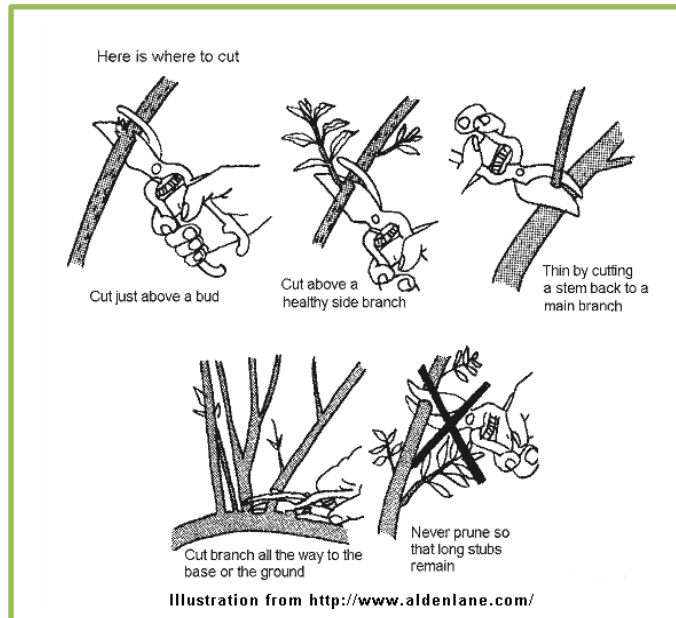


Winter Pruning Primer



What is winter pruning? Pruning deciduous plants in the winter promotes fast regrowth in the spring, as most plants are dormant during the winter. It's also easier to see the shape of deciduous plants in the winter, since their foliage is gone.

Best plants to prune in winter are summer blooming plants. It is possible to cut off flowers of spring bloomers (Rhodies, azalea, lilacs) as these plants bloom on last year's growth or "old wood" these are best pruned after they flower.

1. First prune out dead and diseased branches. Cut back to branch or to the ground.
2. Cut back branches that have grown over where you walk or mow so they don't break off.
3. Where you see two branches crossing, prune off the smaller one.
4. Thin branches judiciously to allow sunlight and air into the center of trees and shrubs. Starting at the center and moving to the exterior, thin the branches that make up the dense mass of a tree or shrub. Your purpose is to increase air circulation through the branches and to accentuate the structure of the plant. Never remove more than one-quarter of a plant in a season since that will encourage sucker growth. Thinning is especially important for trees such as crabapples and hawthorns, which are susceptible to fungal diseases.
5. Work slowly, taking plenty of breaks to step back and look. Is the tree balanced? Does it look symmetrical? Know when to stop; you don't want to hollow out the center. You can always go back and take more off, but you can't put it back on.
6. Always prune back to a bud or a branch. Never leave a stub or the kind of open ends that result from shearing off the top of a plant. Open ends can create dense horizontal sucker-type growth that ruins the natural branching habit, or they can cause dieback and disease. Cut an undesirable

branch just above a bud, keeping in mind that a new branch will grow from that bud. Ideally, the bud should face outward, so the branch will grow toward the exterior of the plant.

A few groups of plants have special pruning requirements:

Hydrangeas:



Big leaf hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) also known as lacecaps and mopheads. These plants bloom on old wood (last year's growth) so should be pruned after they flower. Some of the newer varieties such as Endless Summer; bloom on both old and new wood, so if you must prune in early spring you won't cut off all your flowers.



Smooth hydrangeas (*Hydrangea arborescens*) such as "Annabell" or the newer "Invincibelle" bloom on new wood or current year's growth. These can be pruned in early spring.



Panicle hydrangeas (*Hydrangea paniculata*) such as "PeeGee" or the newer "Limelight" also bloom on new wood so can be pruned in early spring.

Oakleaf hydrangeas (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) all bloom on old wood and should be pruned after they flower.



Climbing hydrangeas (*Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris*) old wood and should be pruned after they flower.

Clematis

Group 1: These are early spring bloomers that flower on the previous year's growth (old wood). They are done blooming by mid- to late spring. Popular varieties in this group include *Clematis macropetala* such as "Jan Lindmark", *C. montana* (fragrant) such as "Mayleen" & "Elizabeth", and *C. alpina* (blue, bell shaped) such as "Pamela Jackman" cultivars, *Clematis armandii* (evergreen) such as "Apple Blossom" These bloom on old wood, prune after flowering. It is usually recommended that this type not be pruned at all only remove dead or diseased wood or to prune for size. Trim unruly outer stems back to woody main stems or near ground level.



Clematis alpina 'Pamela Jackman'



Clematis montana 'Freda'



Clematis integrifolia X *fremontii*
'Stand By Me' – Non Vining Clematis!

Group 2: These are spring and early summer bloomers. They produce flowers on the previous year's growth, as well as on new growth. Most of these are hybrids with very large flowers. Popular varieties include *Clematis patens* & hybrids such as "Nelly Moser", "The President" Winter prune all damaged or dead stems down to ground level. Trim remaining stems back to a point just above the strongest, most visible buds. Then, after the first heavy blooming is complete, prune back to a pair of buds about halfway down the stems. This pruning often will get you another period of blooming on new wood in late summer or early fall.



Clematis 'Nelly Moser'



Clematis 'Warszawska Nike'



Clematis 'Guernsey Cream'

Group 3: This group produces flowers on growth from the current season in late summer and fall. Popular varieties include hybrids, such as Jackman's clematis and 'Ernest Markham.' These plants typically die back to ground level in the winter, cut these plants down to about 2 feet from the ground. Most are vigorous growers; be aggressive about pruning, and make sure to do it each year.



Clematis 'Perle D'Azur'



Clematis 'Ernest Markham'



Clematis tangutica 'Golden Harvest'