

# Pruning Landscape Trees and Shrubs

*What to do and what not to do...*

Antelope Garden Club – January 2013  
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# General Guidelines

- Cut not more than 1/3 off plant at a time
- Prune out dead and crossing branches
- Prune to shape
- Only cut if needed
- Don't use pruning paints or sealers

# When to Prune Established Trees



**Conifers** – anytime, but during dormant season (late fall/early winter) may minimize sap and resin flow from cut branches



**Live oaks** – late winter



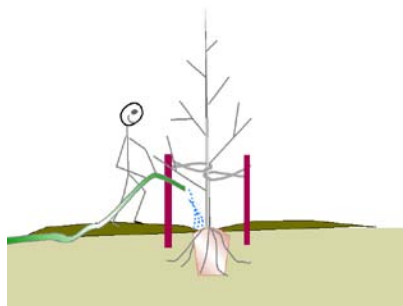
**Deciduous trees** – major pruning when dormant; minor corrective pruning – anytime



**Maple trees** - avoid sap producing times of late winter & early spring

# Newly Planted Landscape Trees

- Will establish faster if not pruned for at least first year after planting
- Leave temporary branches on lower trunk to provide carbohydrates
- Tender bark may be sunburned if too much foliage removed
- Prune out misplaced branches the following winter



# Flowering Shrubs/Trees

- Generally, cut not more than 1/3 of shrub at a time
- If grown for its flowers
  - Spring flowering shrubs bloom on last season's growth (old wood); prune after they bloom
  - Shrubs flowering after June normally bloom from buds formed in the spring (new wood) – prune in late winter



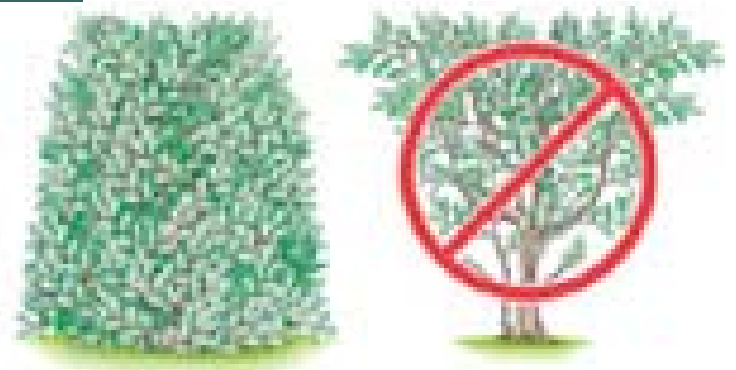
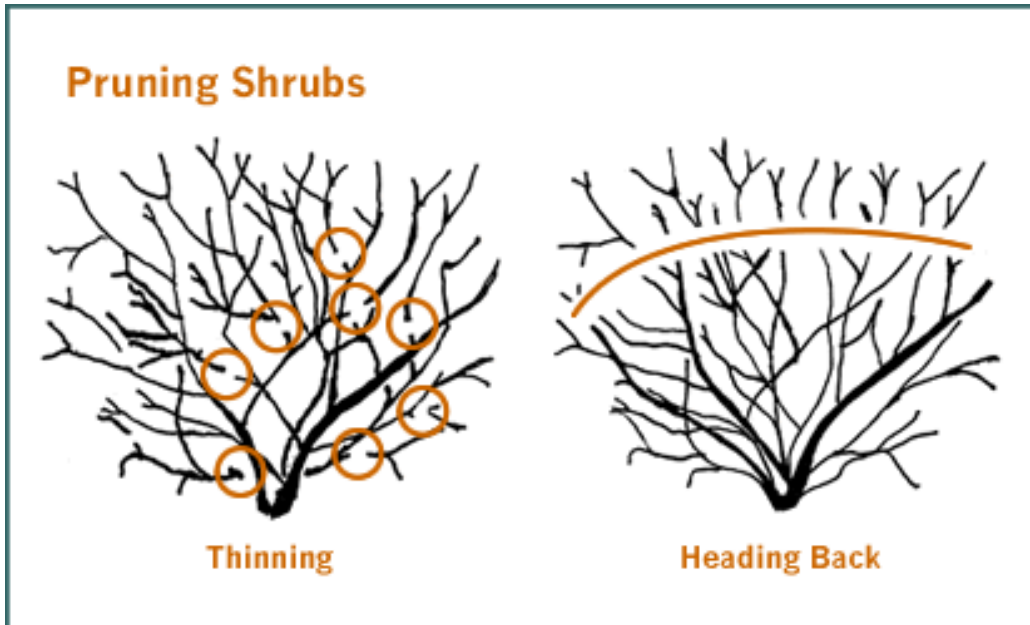
# Badly Pruned Trees



Honey Locust

Don't Top Trees

# Pruning Shrubs



Hedges

# Examples

- Chaste tree
- Butterfly Bush
- Clematis
- Lilacs
- Russian Sage
- Apache Plume
- Texas Sage
- Roses



# Chaste Tree

- Deadhead after bloom – early fall
- Prune dead/crossing branches in late winter



Remove suckers  
anytime

# Butterfly Bush

Cut by 1/3 every 2 years  
in early to mid spring to  
re-invigorate

Or

Can cut to a few inches  
from ground



# Butterfly Bush

Feb 2010 – B4 (9') and aft (20-24")



6' by end of summer

# Clematis



- Group A – mostly evergreen, first to bloom in spring, mostly in zones 6 to 9
- Group B – flower mid-spring on last year's stems; additional flowers on stems that have grown since spring; flowers evenly scattered up & down entire vine
- Group C – bloom late spring /early summer; lower branches have sparse leaves and maybe a few flowers; flowers mostly on new growth

# Group A

- Flowers on last year's growth
- Cut out winter die-back in spring
- Prune to correct growth as soon as bloom finishes
- Slower growers - prune just enough to shape the plant or to keep it in bound
- If there is very old wood on the plant, avoid cutting into it, since it is less likely to re-sprout.



# Group B

- Flowers on last year's stems and the current seasons growth
- In late winter or early spring, when leaf buds start to swell, remove dead leaves; cut out dead stems, unruly stems, etc.



# Group C



- Flowers mostly on new growth
- Flower in late spring / early summer
- If don't cut old stems back for a year the majority of new foliage and flowers will be at the top
- As soon as new sprouts start to swell in spring, cut everything down toward the ground
- If want to cover a pergola, prune only top 1/3 to 1/2 (flowers will be at the top of structure)

# Lilacs



## When to prune

- Not until 6 to 8' tall
- Just after flowers have faded (next season's buds set almost immediately – late pruning will sacrifice next season's flowers)



# Lilacs – How to Maintenance Prune

Start with

- Dead or diseased stems
- Pencil thin suckers and twiggy growth
- Stems thicker than 2” in diameter
- Stems that cross or rub against each other

Not more than 1/3 of stems each year



# Lilacs – Reviving Overgrown

Will take about 3 years

- Prune 1/3 of oldest branches all the way to the ground each year
- Easiest in early spring before branches leaf out

More drastic approach – cut whole plant to about 6 – 8” from ground



# Lilacs - Deadheading

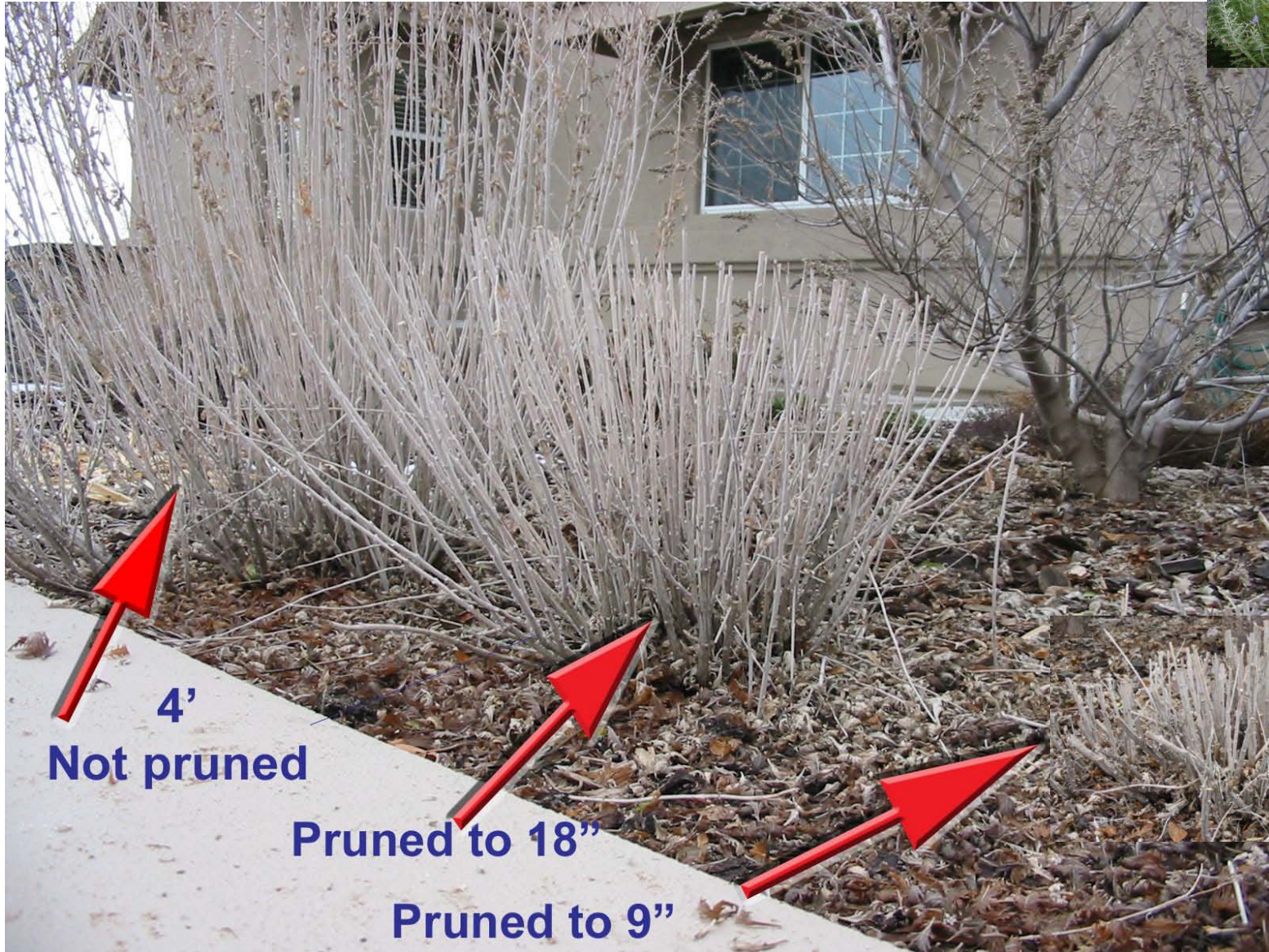
- New plants should bloom within 2 – 5 years
- Deadheading first few years of blooming puts plant's energy into setting more buds
- Deadheading not required or beneficial after that
- Some years will bloom more than others; often weather dependent; stressful summer yields fewer flowers



# Russian Sage Feb 2010



# Russian Sage Feb 2010



4'  
Not pruned

Pruned to 18"

Pruned to 9"

# Russian Sage – June 2010



56" tall

# Wisteria

Prune in Summer and Winter

- Summer to keep compact and tamed
- Winter to remove dead & diseased wood & unwanted whips; cut back to spurs to get more flowers



- Remove water sprouts & suckers immediately

# Apache Plume





# Texas Sage



Sometimes “Plant Balls” are not OK...



Sometimes they are OK



# Roses - Shrubs and Standards (i.e. not climbers)

- Cut back in March
- Remove: crossing branches, dead canes, diseases canes, suckers; stems less than pencil size; dead leaves





# Grandiflora

- 4-8 ft tall
- Leave 3-5 canes
- Cut height back by  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$



# Floribunda



- Often need thinning in center
- Can leave several canes
- Take less than 1/3 off the top

# Hybrid Teas



- Leave 5 to 8 canes on vigorous bushes; can leave up to 12 canes if good spread
- 1 to 2 yr old plants w/ moderate vigor – cut back to 18 to 24 inches; more vigorous plants 24 to 36 inches
- Amount to prune varies w/ available space as plants grow older; general rule – cut back new cane growth about 1/3
- If side branches, keep 2 or 3 well spaced ones and cut back to 4 to 6”

# Carpet Roses



Shear off or cut back so that it is about a foot tall or cut off the top two-thirds of the plant (can use hedge shears or a hedge trimmer)



# Climbers

- Don't prune until after spring/summer bloom
- Cut canes from base of plant; don't cut ends of stems as that will curtail climbing



*Have fun pruning, and remember,  
if you cut off too much, it will, in  
most cases, grow back.*

