

# Winter: prime time to prune!



In winter, many plants lose their leaves and are dormant. This is a good time to prune to get them ready to produce more and look great for spring! A few tips: Prune on a mild, dry day. First prune out dead/diseased branches and remove the overgrown branches to increase light and air at the crown of the tree. Your goal is to keep the branches that develop or maintain the structure of the tree. Cut branches where one branch or twig attaches to another.

Most trees (except for Maples) can be pruned at any point in winter.

Most shrubs are best to prune near the end of winter.



Although winter is a good time to prune most things, maple trees are an exception. If you prune a maple tree in the winter or springtime before it has leaves, the sap bleeds out. This doesn't harm the tree (in fact, this is how we get maple syrup from Sugar Maples!), but it doesn't look very pretty and it may take a long time for the bleeding to stop. If you have a maple tree that needs pruning, wait until it has leaves again. It may still bleed a little, but this should stop soon after.

***Scroll down for info on pruning fruit trees***



Pruning is the key to keeping your fruit trees attractive and productive. Fruit trees should be pruned when dormant and starting to bud – usually in late January or early February. Start by cutting out dead or damaged branches and any sprouts coming from the base of the trunk. Next, remove any branches growing downwards and those that cross over others, competing for space. Continue by thinning the tree until there is a good 6-12 inches of air space around every branch. Finish up by giving the tree a hair cut - prune back the outermost growth of the tree. Cuts should be made flush to the branch, and sharp shears work best.

You can force fruit trees to grow wide instead of tall, making them easier to pick. Do this by finding a bud that is facing away from the center of the tree. Make a clean cut just above that bud and you will see a branch grow outwards from that spot. Do this each January/February to keep fruit trees short, wide, and easy to pick.