Pruning

We prune plants to encourage them to grow more of the parts we want – less foliage, more flowers/fruits! We also prune to shape and control larger trees so they don’t get too tall to harvest from.

Tomatoes

There are many methods to pruning tomatoes – from not pruning at all to pruning most of the foliage off the plant. We suggest pruning tomatoes in three ways:

- Once plants begin to flower, use sharp clippers to remove all branches one foot up from the soil line, or up to the first flower cluster, whichever is lower. This increases airflow and reduces chances of leaves staying damp on the soil surface, which can spread disease.
- Remove all suckers (see diagram) to keep plant to one main stem. Ideally you will pinch these with your fingers when they are small, use caution when deciding whether to clip larger suckers. Do not prune if the sucker already has flowers or fruit. (fun fact: you can root and plant suckers as new plants)
- Prune diseased and damaged foliage in moderation. Never remove more than 1/3 of the foliage on any plant. Try to avoid pruning that leaves fruits exposed to direct sunlight. Carefully dispose of diseased clippings and wipe/dip your clippers between plants.

These pruning techniques are ongoing throughout tomato season. While pruning and/or harvesting you should also remove any rotten or damaged fruits.
**Flowers**

Most annual and perennial flowers will bloom for many months if old faded blooms are removed. If they remain on the plant, they will continue to form seed heads which redirects the plants’ energy away from new blooms.

Prune faded blooms directly above the first node of the stem, where new buds are visible.

This is not a priority task but can always be done when you have a few minutes.

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**Perennials**

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<tr>
<th>What You Are Pruning</th>
<th>Late Winter/Early Spring (Dormant Season)</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackberries</td>
<td>Tip pruning which is cutting off the tip of the branches. It encourages side branching and focuses on producing more fruit rather than growing taller. Generally want the tallest branch to only be 2 feet tall, for the shorter canes, just an inch off the tip is fine. Spring pruning also includes pruning off any dead or diseased canes.</td>
<td>Clean pruning which is cutting off the canes that have fruited. Blackberries only produce fruit on canes that are two years old, therefore those canes will never produce fruit again. Cutting it will encourage the bush to produce more first year growth canes.</td>
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<td><strong>Raspberries</strong></td>
<td>Prune the canes that fruited the previous year to the ground as well as any that look weak, dead, or diseased. Ideally, a trellis would be included because they are unstable and fall over. If more raspberry plants are wanted, this is a good way to get more by mound layering. As the canes fall and touch the ground, add soil/compost on top and they will root. <strong>Same goes for the golden raspberries.</strong></td>
<td>After they are no longer producing fruit, prune the fruited canes to the ground.</td>
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| **Figs** | **Note: Wear protective clothes because when pruning, the sap that seeps from the wounds can really irritate your skin.** | **You typically only want four to six branches to promote fruiting rather than more branching.**  
Best time to prune figs are when they are dormant. Prune any diseased or winter damaged branches off. Isolate your four to six branches that look the healthiest/strongest. Prune back any suckers from the base and from the main branches. Lastly, cut down the |
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<th><strong>Lavender</strong></th>
<th>After the first flowering, cut lavender back in the summer down one third, in order to promote more flowering and to prolong the life of the plant which can last over 20 years if pruned yearly. Do not prune the woody base.</th>
<th>Pruning in the fall after there isn’t any more flowering would be a good idea again as it will encourage good air circulation. Twice a year pruning is ideal.</th>
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<td><strong>Kiwi</strong></td>
<td>Rigorous pruning should be done when the plant is dormant. Cutting the main shoots to 3-4 feet high. Cutting off any dead, diseased, and suckers would also be good at this time.</td>
<td>As growing and fruiting continues, pruning should be done throughout the growing season by removing any vines that are weak or that are twirling around the wires or trellises. Suckers, water sprouts, and excessive side branching should also be pruned back</td>
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| Concord Grapes | Prune back last year’s growth. Grapes fruit from current year’s growth from last year’s wood. The growth on the old growth wood should be pruned to allow it to say only about 2 feet in length. | After vines have fruited, prune shoots to the fourth leaf, leaving shoots that have grapes on them. Remove leaves that are shading fruits, you want the ripening fruits to get as much sun as possible. | Late Spring: Once all new leaves are developed, prune any weak or thin shoots. |}

**Apples**

The following is apple tree pruning information that should only be used as a base and should be further researched because there are many practices.

- When the tree is dormant in the early spring, prune back any suckers and water sprouts. Also a good time to shape the tree by scaffolding. Have only one leading branch and prune the side branches shorter so they do not compete or overtake.
- Early spring, crowded branches should also be removed as well as branches that are growing downward, leave only branches that grow upwards.
- Don't remove growing spurs.
- Generally, pruning should be finished by May 1, before full growth period begins.
- Pruning twice a year is a good practice for any plant. While the plant is dormant and then again after harvest.
- It's important to not over prune because it can delay the fruiting of the tree. So focus on weak, thin, and/or damaged, as well as water sprouts.
- Also good to control the height of the tree by pruning the main shoot if it continues to grow taller.