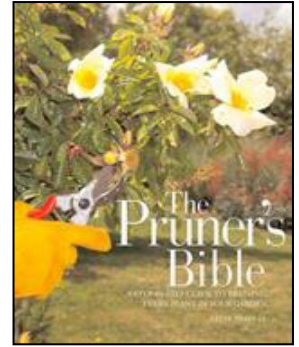


# THE PRUNERS BIBLE: (available at library)

is a Step-by-step Guide to Pruning Every Plant in Your Garden

Pruning is probably the area of gardening that causes the most anxiety to the average gardener. Many books add to that anxiety with illustrations that show completely different plants from those in the reader's own garden, or directions that use complex terms without explaining them.

In contrast, this plant-by-plant guide demonstrates the correct pruning technique for 80 of the most widely planted trees and shrubs, with photographs and instructions that are so clear they will inspire confidence in even the novice gardener.



This book provides:

- Basic rights and wrongs about making cuts-with information clearly photographed in step-by-step sequence
- What tools to buy and how to look after them-and how to choose the right tool for each job
- What to do with the debris -the pros and cons of shredding, burning, bagging, and composting
- How to select young trees and shrubs that will grow into well-shaped specimens-with little or no pruning required

This book covers shrubs, climbers, roses, and ornamental and fruit trees, with separate sections on hedges, topiary, and special techniques, and will be a great guide for pruning for years to come. Below – see the proper pruning for a very common shrub in Edgebrook: Hydrangeas!

.....just check it out as needed!!

**Hydrangea**  
*Hydrangea, common hydrangea*  
The massed flowers of hydrangeas are familiar sights in oil but the very coldest of gardens, bringing delicate shades from summer to early winter.

Hydrangeas are good indicator plants for telling the gardener what the soil is like. A predominance of pink flowers indicates alkaline conditions, while blue flowers signify acidic soil. White blooms rarely respond to the lime content in the soil by changing color either way. It is hardly worth going to the trouble of amending your soil to try to make the flowers of pink forms turn blue and vice versa; it's just not easy to change the pH in your soil over the long haul.

Naturally woodland plants, hydrangeas must have reliably moist but well-drained soil to which plenty of well-rotted organic matter has been added. Apply an annual mulch of well-rotted compost to keep the roots cool and moist. They also need the protection of applied shade.

Mature plants can grow from 3 feet tall to 10 feet or more, depending on the species. Some form a dense thicket of green stems, which turn brown with age, and the oldest stems have frayed, shredding bark. The broadly oval leaves are bright midgreen and slightly paler on the underside, each with a sharp point at the tip. All the foliage has coarsely toothed margins.

The flowers are minute, and the main color is provided by four brightly colored bracts, which surround all or some of the flowers. *Hydrangea arborescens* and *H. paniculata* flower on new growth. The flowers of *H. macrophylla* are mainly borne on the previous season's wood.

Prune *H. arborescens* and *H. paniculata* and their cultivars in spring, just as the growth starts. *H. quercifolia* (oakleaf hydrangea) is grown primarily for its oak leaf-shaped foliage and excellent fall color. It's best when grown in a protected area; if grown in an exposed site, it can experience some winter dieback. Prune in early spring to remove dead wood. Cut back to below the point of injury and remove old wood to the base.

*H. macrophylla* and *H. serrata* can be pruned in late summer after flowering. If spring pruning, remove only dead wood and shoots that develop after the previous year's. Fall or spring pruning can sacrifice bloom. *H. macrophylla* 'Quadricolor' (a cultivar) is grown for its attractive leaves, which are variegated pale and dark green, cream-white, and gold, rather than for its flowers.

**Formative pruning**  
New young plants to encourage them to develop a bushy habit, with strong shoots emerging from just at or above ground level. After planting, cut out any weak or longer shoots. Lightly pinch off the remaining shoots to about two-thirds of their height so new shoots can emerge from the base of the plant.

**Routine pruning**  
Hydrangeas need regular pruning if they are to flower well. It's important to remove the old wood which would otherwise gradually accumulate. In spring, prune species that bloom on new growth by shortening each shoot by about one-third, cutting back to a pair of strong, healthy buds so that there is a good display of flowers later in the year. Cut this spindly shoots back to ground level. Remove any shoots that are crossing and rubbing.

**Remedial pruning**  
Hydrangeas tend to become woody and overcrowded as they age, with lots of thin, weak, straggly stems producing fewer and fewer flowers, especially if pruning has been neglected. This can be overcome with hard pruning, although the following season's flowers may be lost. In late winter or early spring, cut the old, straggly shoots back to within 4 to 6 inches of ground level. Cut out any thin, weak growth on new shoots can develop.

**WHY PRUNE?**  
To remove flower sets and quality and to encourage the plant to develop on open, balanced stems.

**PRUNING TIPS**  
• Use sharp tools so that you do not accidentally split the stems.

**PLANTS PRUNED THIS WAY**  
*Hydrangea arborescens* and cvs. in spring on new growth  
*Hydrangea paniculata* and cvs. in spring on new growth  
*Hydrangea quercifolia* and cvs. in spring on new growth  
*Hydrangea macrophylla* and cvs. in late summer after flowering  
*Hydrangea serrata* and cvs. in late summer after flowering

**WHICH TOOLS**  
Hand pruners  
Long-handled shears (secateurs)

**WHEN TO PRUNE MOST SPECIES**  
Spring: early, mid, late  
Summer  
Fall  
Winter