



## Ken Matthews Garden Center

### PRUNING CALENDAR FOR THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA

- January –** Prune long branches of forsythia, pussy willow and other early spring flowering shrubs for forcing into bloom indoors
- February –** An excellent month to prune most plant materials. Prune shade trees; trees will “bleed” which will not hurt them. Prune trees and small fruit. *Do not prune spring flowering plants.*
- Prune hydra tea and grandiflora roses to three or four strong canes, 18 inches long, by February 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Prune summer blooming plants such as crepe myrtles, vitex and butterfly bush. Prune santolina back hard; thin nandina stalks by 1/3. Spray a horticultural dormant oil on plants to reduce pest problems. Remove all debris, including fallen leaves. Put three to four inches of mulch around plants.
- March –** “Rejuvenation” pruning of over-grown broadleaf evergreens should be done the latter part of this month. Cut well-established plants to within eight inches of the ground. Fertilize and water. This can be done to pyracantha, azalea, camellia, ligustrum, euonymus, nandina, hollies, evergreen magnolia, gardenia, boxwood and other broadleaf evergreens.
- Give azaleas and other spring flowering plants, such as forsythia, their yearly pruning *immediately* after they bloom. These are pruned by the renewal pruning technique. These plants *should not* be sheared. All pruning should be completed by June 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Mow evergreen ground covers such as English ivy, periwinkle, ajuga and mondo.
- May -** To achieve dense growth on pines, break or cut the new “candles” in half.
- Pinch annuals to induce branching. Start pinching mums and continue until July 15<sup>th</sup> for spray types. For large specimen mum blooms, grow one to three stems per plant and disbud to one bud later in the season.
- June -** Keep faded flowers of annuals and some perennials picked for continuous bloom. Prune climbing roses immediately after blooming. Keep roses open for light and air penetration.

**July -** Prune shade trees to shape them and remove lower limbs. This should include only light pruning. Heavy pruning will cause stimulation and late season growth.

Cut back scraggly annuals such as petunia, and fertilize for bloom until frost.

Clip sheared hedges and screens regularly to maintain the desired size; always taper their growth from narrow at the top to broad at the base.

Remove dead flowers from crepe myrtle and vitex to encourage a second crop of blooms. Prune shrubs into natural looking shapes that are broader at the base – *no baseballs please!*

**August -** Disbud mums and camellias. Slow down pruning activities on shrubs and trees. Prune only on a 'have to' basis. Late pruning can stimulate new growth.

**September -** Disbud camellias for larger bloom.

Halt pruning on all shrubs and trees; the new growth induced by fall pruning is susceptible to winter injury.

Root prune large trees or those in the wild to be moved next year; this will encourage the development of fibrous root system and reduce planting shock.

**October -** No drastic pruning this month. Check trees and shrubs and remove any dead or diseased wood.

**November -** Prune perennials such as phlox and asparagus to the ground to remove dead stalks and attached insect eggs and diseases.

Prune back whips on roses to about 4-6 feet; do heavy pruning in February.

**December -** Prune evergreens for use as Christmas decorations.

**Anytime -** Remove dead or diseased wood from any tree or shrub.

Prune the weaker of two rubbing or interfacing branches that are developing bark wounds.

Remove suckers or waterspouts on limbs or at base of plants. Always use the proper tool and make sure it's sharp.

Never leave stubs or ragged cuts. Never use pruning paint; let wound heal naturally. Be sure to leave the branch collar.