



Now's an ideal time to prune shrubs, fruit trees, grapes, evergreens and almost all other garden plants, except roses.

For roses wait until all danger of heavy frost is over. During cold weather plants are dormant, and fresh, open wounds are less subject to insect and disease attacks.

Like everything else, there are a few exceptions. Spring flowering shrubs are best pruned after they have flowered. If loss of some of this season's blooms is not important, go ahead and prune them now.

A few items such as maple and birch bleed (see sap) after pruning in late winter. Many gardeners think this is like a bleeding finger, but actually bleeding to plants does not harm. It's a bit unsightly. Grapes often bleed after pruning, and so do others, but it's nothing to worry about.

When you prune, you might want to head the plants back, thin them out or just shear them. Shearing is the one

technique used frequently, but is one of the poorest for plants. Save your shearing for hedges or some evergreens such as arbutus.

"Heading back" means that branches are cut back to healthy side buds. Its purpose is to reduce the size of a plant without destroying the natural shape. Heading back develops more dense growth, since branches cut back may develop more than one new branch from each shoot.

Thinning a bush means that an entire branch is completely removed - you thin them out, and no stub remains so the wound heals rapidly. Proper thinning should be done gradually over a period of several years, removing only a few old or diseased branches at a time. If the bush is full of dense growth you can do the job all in one period.

Don't be afraid to prune. Forget many of the rules that bog most gardeners down. It's better to do some pruning than to neglect the plant and let it grow into a monster.

F.F.E.: Is pruning a mystery to you? Send me a self-addressed stamped envelope for my illustrated booklet, "Principles of Pruning."

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: "We have a Dieffenbachia (Dumb cane) plant which produces lily-like flowers. Should the spent blooms be cut off?"

Answer: You can leave them on and let them form seed pods. These are attractive - red. The seed can be planted in a pot of sand and peatmoss so you can raise baby dieffenbachia plants.

Why do foliage plants die in planters? In most cases it's due to too much water, or poor drainage. Don't make the mistake of putting hairy, thorny and waxed-leaved plants in the same planter, as these all require different watering.

Plants in plastic or glazed containers do not dry out as quickly as plants in a clay pot. When you set plants in place pot and all so that if one dies, you can lift it out completely without disturbing the others.

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: "Our poinsettia still looks nice and fresh. Can we make new plants by cutting tips back and rooting them?"

Answer: Yes, and the plants will be same color and vigor as parent plant.

Wayne County Offers Tree, Shrub Seedlings

There are many places for good quality trees in Wayne County in rural as well as in residential areas.

In fact, you probably have such a place for trees around your house, building, or play area. Trees can be used as a natural screen to give you the privacy of your pool, patio or backyard.

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In rural areas trees have been planted for reforestation, wildlife habitat improvement, farmstead, and feed lot windbreaks, as well as those reasons given in residential planting.

The Wayne County Soil Conservation District is making trees available to the public.

These are tree seedlings that range from six inches to 12 inches in height. The minimum order is 50 trees of any species.

The evergreens available are: Scotch pine, red pine and white pine at \$4 per 100; Norway

spruce at \$5 per 100; and blue spruce at \$8 per hundred.

The hardwood trees and shrubs are honey-suckle and stratified black walnut. The black walnuts are \$1.50 per pound of nuts.

In addition to the trees, a packet of 250 assorted hardwood shrubs is available at \$8 per packet. Some of the shrubs are: autumn olive, silky dogwood, Washington hawthorne and Siberian crab. All of the shrubs produce fruit that is preferred food for a variety of song birds.

Orders will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. We reserve the right to cancel orders and refund payment if necessitated by "weather or reasons beyond our control."

Orders should be received by April 1. To obtain order blanks contact the Wayne County Soil Conservation District, P.O. Box 642, 2056 S. Wayne Rd., Westland, MI 48186.

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