



The Green Thumb

By GEORGE ABRAHAM

Pruning shrubs: With spring not too far off(?) many home gardeners are getting the itch to trim some shrubs and ornamentals.

No reason why you can't start trimming any time now, and save the clippings to force them into bloom indoors. Most of them will bloom if you put the twigs in a vase of water. Here are a few shrubs and tips on pruning them:

Altheas (rose of sharon): Needs little pruning. Prune anytime before growth starts.

Almonds: Prune little, if at all, directly after they bloom.

Barberry: Trim any time. Butterfly bush. Dies back nearly to ground in winter. Wait until spring and cut all branches back to live wood.

Calyceanthus: Needs no pruning, except to remove a dead branch or an unruly one if desired. Do any time.

Coralberry: Needs no pruning, except to keep it in good form.

Cornus (dogwoods): trim sparingly, if at all.

Cranberry (high bush): This is a large bush and should have room to develop naturally. Do not prune, as you will remove flowers and berries.

Deutzia: Prune very little, if at all, just after blossoming. Deutzia gracilis may need an occasional trimming, but wait until after blooming. Most deutzias will winter-kill a bit

at the tips so in spring, just snip off the dead tips.

Forsythia can be trimmed now. Put the trimmings in a vase for a room full of golden bells. Or wait and trim after blooming. Heavy pruning now will remove buds and spoil your spring show.

Honeysuckle (Tatarian), needs thinning out once in a while. Prune sparingly.

Hydrangea (snowball bush) can be trimmed back to the ground. You'll get fewer but larger blossoms. Prune before any growth starts. Hydrangea P.G. can be trimmed simply by cutting off the old blossoms.

Japanese Quince needs no pruning except slightly to keep it in good form. Lilacs can be thinned out. Cut dead wood, limbs that crisscross one another, and remove some sucker growth. Privet can be shaped in spring.

If spiraea are overgrown and have a lot of leggy growth, cut the plants back to within six inches and let all new growth appear.

A rough rule to follow: shrubs that blossom early on last year's growth should be pruned just after the bloom. Those that blossom late in summer or in fall, bloom on twig growth of the summer and should be trimmed in the spring, before any growth starts.

GREEN THUMB bonus: Are you baffled about trimming forsythia or stubborn lilacs? Send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope for my bulletin, "How to Trim Lilacs and Forsythias." It's guaranteed to make these plants bloom by the bushel for you.

Farmer's Week EAST LANSING
Farmers' Week, an annual event at Michigan State University featuring the latest agricultural developments, will be held March 20-24, according to Byron H. Good, MSU professor of animal husbandry and event chairman.

Theme for the 1972 show is "Now and 1985." The program will tie in with "Project 80 & 5," a study in which members of MSU's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources have been taking a hard look at what rural Michigan will be like in 1985, with some additional glimpses at the year 2000.

Farmers' Week is open to the public, and annually draws some 20,000 visitors to the MSU campus.



THE DICTIONARY defines the word "den" as: a center of secret activity; a hollow or cavern used especially as a hideout; an animal's lair. Today, the most common explanation is a comfortable, secluded room. This family den designed by Leif Pederson NSID sports a profusion of "collectibles." Bleached oak floors stained white, contrasts with lustrous tones of antique furniture. Red walls and upholstery lend vivacity.

'Boy Proof' Son's Room

You can "Boy-proof" a youngster's room so that vulnerable walls become resistant to childish abuses and maintenance consists of an occasional damp-wiping rather than frequent repainting or papering.

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Focal Point
If you're looking for something unusual in interior treatments, check the five-foot wide mural panels by Marlite.

Winter Is Good Time For Some Yard Work

EAST LANSING
Go out there in all that snow and work in the yard? You've got to be kidding!

Now that your first reaction is out of the way, Michigan State University landscaping experts do recommend winter as the best time to do some of that necessary yard work so you won't be hassled with it next summer.

Now is a good time to remove any dead or dying trees. If the tree is small, and there aren't any complications like phone or power lines, you can do it yourself. If it is big, now is a better time to hire skilled tree workmen. Spring and summer will find these experts busy fertilizing, spraying and pruning.

If they come when the ground is frozen, your lawn won't be damaged by the falling tree or by their trucks. Also, leafless trees are more easily cut and disposed of.

Winter is a good time to pick out ornamental plants and shrubs for later planting. A trip to the nurseryman now will let you see how the plants look in the winter, and you can pick out plants that have interesting bark colors, foliage or berries that will add a little color to your winter landscape.

After heavy ice or snow storms, check your evergreens. The extra weight of ice or snow can break branches or ruin the attractive shape of prized shrubs.

When you check the plants, use a broom to brush off excess snow or ice before the plant becomes damaged. If the temperature is very low (below zero) use extreme care when removing snow and ice. At these temperatures the woody parts of the plant are very brittle and many break when you remove ice or snow.

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