



Landscape Design

1711 King Street • Santa Cruz, California 95060
www.pwlandscapedesign.com • pwalters@pwlandscapedesign.com
831-458-1307 fax • 831-458-1305 phone

The Kindest Cut

Published March 2006

When should you prune your trees, shrubs and grasses? It's a question often asked! Here are some quick guidelines to help you get and keep your garden in top shape.

Conifers may be pruned any time of year, but pruning during the dormant season (winter) can minimize sap and resin flow from cut branches.

Hardwood trees and shrubs *without showy flowers* should also be pruned in the winter, when you can easily see the structure of the plant. Cutting in winter also helps to prevent the spread of disease from plant to plant. Make sure to clean your tools with a solution of 1/2-cup bleach to 1 gallon water to avoid spreading any disease.

Flowering trees and shrubs are a little trickier. When you cut depends upon when they bloom. To preserve the flower crop, prune spring blooming plants (e.g., redbud, dogwood) immediately after they flower so you don't cut off your blooms! Next year's flower buds will form on the new growth. Prune trees and shrubs that flower in the summer or fall (e.g., roses) while they are still dormant; flower buds will form on the new growth and bloom on schedule.

Citrus don't require pruning, just prune to control the shape of the plant and to remove dead or diseased branches. In fact, you can remove dead branches on any type of plant any time of the year.

And don't forget your perennials and ornamental grasses. They also benefit from a winter trim. I take out the hedge trimmers and give mine a buzz cut right around Valentine's Day, before they start their spring growth.