



## *Bucks Country Gardens*

### **A Simple Guide to Pruning Evergreen Trees & Shrubs**

#### **FIR TREES (ABIES SPECIES):**

**How To Prune:** Prune only to remove dead or broken branches. Don't cut back into leafless wood or the whole branch may die.

**When To Prune:** From late summer to just before growth begins in spring.

#### **ENGLISH HOLLY (LLEX AQUIFOLIUM):**

**How To Prune:** Adaptable to many different pruning techniques including shearing. To train as tree, select single leader when young and thin vigorous branches as needed.

**When To Prune:** Late dormant season, Christmas time if clippings to be used as decoration.

#### **AMERICAN HOLLY (LLEX OPACA):**

**How To Prune:** Prune when transplanting to promote single leader and thin for pyramidal habit. Thin branches as needed to maintain shape. For specimen tree allow lower branches to remain. Can withstand heavy pruning and shearing.

**When To Prune:** Late dormant season is best, but can be pruned at other times (heavy pruning after flowering or during summer may reduce berries).

#### **SPRUCE (PICEA SPECIES):**

**How To Prune:** Need little pruning other than removing dead branches. To stimulate denser habit, cut new growth back halfway.

**When To Prune:** Late summer to late dormant season.

#### **DOUGLAS FIR (PSEUDOTSUGA MENZIESII):**

**How To Prune:** Pinch new growth on horizontal limbs for more compact growth and less weight on branches. If older tree is topped, it will decline immediately. Young trees can be sheared into a formal hedge.

**When To Prune:** Late dormant season, after spring growth to slow the tree.

#### **YEW (TAXUS SPECIES):**

**How To Prune:** Yews grow in two spurts, in spring and summer. Shear at least twice a year for a formal appearance. This, however, results in a thin shell of foliage on the plant's exterior with bare branches inside. For an informal hedge, thin before new growth begins in spring. Thin about 1/4 of old growth back to lateral branches. For a tree shape, encourage central leader and prune laterals with thinning cuts. To rejuvenate, cut to within 6"-12" of the ground in early spring before growth begins.

**When To Prune:** Dormant season for major pruning, anytime to shape and trim.

#### **AMERICAN ARBORVITAE:**

**How To Prune:** If grown naturally, arborvitae only needs touch-up thinning. For screen, let plants grow a foot taller than desired height. Top leaders back to 6" below desired height and thin laterals.

**When To Prune:** Late dormant season for major cuts; after spring growth for touch-up pruning.

**HEMLOCK (TSUGA SPECIES):**

**How To Prune:** Tolerate heavy shearing and can be maintained as formal hedge or windbreak. Can also be trimmed heavily for informal hedge. Occasional thinning will keep sheared hedges thicker.

**When To Prune:** Late dormant season.

**GLOSSY ABELIA (ABELIA GRANDIFLORA):**

**How To Prune:** Flowers on the previous season's wood. Remove 1/3 of the oldest growth annually to encourage new growth. Abelia can be sheared but will lose most of the flowers and natural beauty. Rejuvenate by cutting almost to the ground.

**When To Prune:** Dormant season.

**GOLD DUST PLANT (AUCUBA JAPONICA):**

**How To Prune:** If upright shoots become too floppy, head just above a new bud.

**When To Prune:** Late dormant season for major cuts, after spring growth to shape lightly.

**WARTY BARBERRY (BERBERIS VERRUCULOSA):**

**How To Prune:** Thin older canes at the base every year.

**When To Prune:** Late dormant season.

**BOXWOOD (BUXUS SPECIES):**

**How To Prune:** For a formal hedge shear the leading growth of young plants to produce the maximum number of branches. Boxwood can also be thinned for a handsome, more casual hedge.

**When To Prune:** Late dormant season for all major pruning; anytime to maintain neatness and shape.

**LEMON BOTTLEBRUSH, CRIMSON BOTTLEBRUSH (CALLISTEMON CITRINUS):**

**How To Prune:** It can be trained into a small tree, multi-trunked shrub, or espalier. For best flowering cut back a little each year. Cut only into the leafy parts of the stem since bottlebrush doesn't resprout from bare wood.

**When To Prune:** Late dormant season or immediately after flowering.

**HEATH, HEATHER (CALLUNA AND ERICA):**

**How To Prune:** Cut back in early spring to stimulate dense new growth. They can be clipped back severely in early spring.

**When To Prune:** After flowers fade.

**CAMELLIA (CAMELLIA SPECIES):**

**How To Prune:** Start shaping the plant when young to encourage dominance of single stem with many branches. Frequent pinching afterward keeps pruning problems to a minimum. Maintain shape by taking two or three leaves when cutting flowers. To reduce size of plant drastically, cut back branches in late dormant season to 1/4 their length. This forces buds to break along stem. The next spring think top to desired height.

**When To Prune:** Late dormant season for major cuts; anytime to shape.