

## PROPER PRUNING - RESOURCE LINKS

A thorough four-part series from NC State Extension for home gardeners, with lots of color pictures:

**Part 1, Before the Cut – basic concepts and key terms** (publication AG 780-1)

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/before-the-cut>

**Part 2, Tools to Make the Cut** (publication AG 780-2)

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/tools-to-make-the-cut>

**Part 3, General Pruning Techniques** (publication AG 780-3)

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/general-pruning-techniques>

**Part 4, How to Prune Specific Plants - and when** (publication AG 780-4)

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/how-to-prune-specific-plants>

**Tree Pruning Video Series** – Dr. Barbara Fair, Horticulture dept. at NC State University

-8 videos, around 2 minutes each, with explanations and demonstrations

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLoDIM1Hxaj9qUtB-0\\_67G1fjsBJyUZAA0](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLoDIM1Hxaj9qUtB-0_67G1fjsBJyUZAA0)

**NC Extension Gardener Handbook, Pruning section:** [https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/11-woody-ornamentals#section\\_heading\\_9719](https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/11-woody-ornamentals#section_heading_9719)

**NC Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox:** <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/>

**Find an Arborist: ISA searchable database** (International Society of Arboriculture)

<https://www.treesaregood.org/findanarborist/findanarborist>

**Hydrangea Selection, Pruning, and Care** (Virginia Cooperative Extension)

[https://chesapeake.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/chesapeake\\_ext\\_vt\\_edu/files/pruning-hydrangeas.pdf](https://chesapeake.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/chesapeake_ext_vt_edu/files/pruning-hydrangeas.pdf)

**Pruning Roses** (Clemson Cooperative Extension)

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/pruning-roses/>

**Crape Myrtle Pruning** (Clemson Cooperative Extension)

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/crape-myrtle-pruning>

**NC STATE** EXTENSION

Master Gardener | Guilford County

**LIST COMPILED AND DISTRIBUTED BY NC STATE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER<sup>SM</sup> VOLUNTEERS, GUILFORD COUNTY**

**In Guilford county, contact us with questions: email [guilfordmg@gmail.com](mailto:guilfordmg@gmail.com), or leave a message at 336 641-2404**

## PROPER PRUNING - TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR ORNAMENTAL TREES AND SHRUBS

- It's important to use the right tool for the job, and also to keep your tools clean and sharp. Choose loppers or a saw if working on a branch that is too big for hand pruners, to avoid potential injury to either the plant or the gardener.
- Video from Guilford Extension - **Selecting Pruning Tools:** <https://youtu.be/TiyHB-cITIQ>
- Video from Guilford Extension - **Sharpening Pruning Tools:** <https://youtu.be/WD1tujEWKXc>
- General pruning guidelines: remove the five “D”s – anything that is dead, diseased, damaged, dying, or dangerous. Broken and crossing or rubbing branches can also be removed at any time.
- Prune trees and shrubs in the right season to avoid removing flower buds – see Links on page 1.
- Consult with an ISA Certified Arborist for guidance if you need large or extensive tree work. Don't top trees! See this link for a list that covers Guilford county and the surrounding area: <https://guilford.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022-ISA-Certified-Arborist-List.pdf?fwd=no>

**How to Hire a Tree Care Professional** (NC State Extension, publication AG-691)  
<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/how-to-hire-a-tree-care-professional>

### ***Maintaining your Pruning Shears - Only sharp shears will work well***

Well-maintained shears will last a long time. Do not cut anything with them except plant material (stems, branches, etc.). Do not twist them left and right while cutting. Keep them clean and sharp.

- Keep the shears clean. Plant sap, dirt and rust will interfere with a good, clean cut.
- Shears can be cleaned with any good home cleaner or a solvent spray. If needed, use steel wool or a wire brush to help remove the residue.
- Bypass pruners: one side of the cutting blade will be beveled; the other side will be flat. Use a flat file or a small sharpening stone and stroke the beveled side several times while maintaining the file or stone at a small angle. Use your thumb to feel the sharpness of the blade. If you feel a rough edge on the flat side, give the flat side one light stroke with the file or stone to remove the burrs.
- Anvil style shears have one sharpened blade that cuts into a thicker, flat anvil. Use a flat file or a small sharpening stone and stroke the beveled cutting edge 3 or 4 times, keeping the angle of the file or stone small. Ensure that the anvil line is clean of debris.
- Finally, oil all pivot points and wipe a light coating of oil on all metal surfaces.