

PRUNING EVERGREENS

Junipers - To limit size, thin new growth almost to the point of origin. Make the cuts just above side shoots that are going in the desired direction. Thin the top branches to prevent shading of lower branches and to provide a layered look.

Rejuvenate junipers by cutting out entire branches and cutting others back to where they branch.

When: Prune late dormant through early spring, February - April. Light pruning can be done anytime.

Yews - Yews have growth spurts in spring and in summer. If a formal look is desired, such as a hedge or topiary, yews should be sheared twice a year. A disadvantage to shearing is that a thin foliage shell can develop around a bare interior. For an informal hedge or specimen, use thinning cuts once a year before new growth begins in spring.

To rejuvenate a yew, cut to within 6 to 12 inches of the ground in early spring.

When: Late dormant to early spring, February-April, for major pruning. Light pruning can be done anytime.

Arborvitae and Cedar - If grown naturally, little pruning is needed. To attain a desired height for hedges or screens, allow plants to grow 6 inches to one foot taller than desired height. Then cut back to about 6 inches below desired height. Allow plant to grow to desired height. This provides a strong attractive surface that can be maintained with yearly trimming. Keep in mind that arborvitae and cedar don't resprout from bare wood.

When: Late dormant to shape, February and March. Touch ups after spring growth into early summer.

Spruce - Other than removing occasional dead branches, spruces require almost no pruning. To create denser growth, cut new growth back about halfway. Try to maintain lower branches. Avoid topping since it will result in a multiple-leader tree. If the central leader is lost or must be removed, train a new one.

When: Prune late dormant to early spring, February to April.

Pines - Usually need little or no pruning. Remove dead wood. Never leave a stub. Pinch candles to stimulate more compact growth. If you want to limit growth, wait until candles are 2 to 4 inches long and then pinch 1/4 to 1/2 off. For no growth, let candles grow to 1 inch and then remove. Avoid topping since it will result in an unnatural multiple-leader tree.

When: In spring after candles elongate, but before needles expand. Remove dead wood anytime.

Firs - Usually need little or no pruning. Remove dead and broken branches. Don't cut back to leafless wood or the entire branch may die. Avoid topping since it will result in a multiple leader. If more than one leader forms, remove weaker ones. Leave lower branches if possible. Limit growth and make denser by trimming candles back about half way.

When: Late dormant into spring, February-April.

Hemlock - Need little or no pruning. Hemlocks tolerate shearing - can be used as hedge or windbreak. Will also tolerate heavy thinning.