

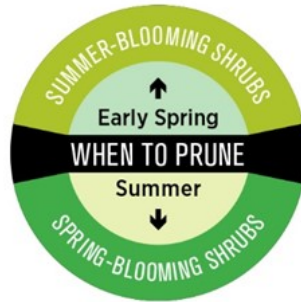
Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

Tips for Pruning Shrubbbery

Pruning is essential to maintain healthy and attractive bushes and shrubs in your garden. It involves removing dead or damaged branches, shaping the plants and promoting new growth. Here are five steps to follow to prune bushes and shrubs effectively.

1. Choose the right time to prune

Timing is crucial when it comes to pruning. Pruning at the wrong time can lead to diseases, stunted growth or, in extreme cases, death of the plant. The ideal time to prune depends on the type of shrub or bush. Spring-blooming shrubs should be pruned after they bloom, while summer-blooming shrubs should be pruned in early spring.



2. Use proper pruning tools

Using the right tools can make a huge difference in the outcome of your pruning. Invest in high-quality pruning shears, loppers and saws to ensure that you make clean cuts that do not damage the plant.



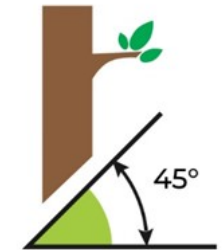
3. Identify the branches to prune

Before pruning, examine the plant to identify the branches that need to be removed. Start by removing dead, damaged or diseased branches. Discoloration, swelling or sunken areas are signs of diseased branches.



4. Cut at the right angle and position

When pruning, make cuts at a 45-degree angle to promote healing. Make the cut about a quarter inch above the bud. Cutting too close can damage the bud, while cutting too far will leave a stub that can attract pests and diseases.



5. Shape the plant

If you want to shape the plant, cut back branches to promote new growth in the desired areas. Trim the branches to create a symmetrical shape and maintain the size of the plant. Avoid over-pruning as this can lead to stress the plant won't recover from.



Colors for Wood Floors

If you are refinishing or installing wood floors, your final color selection is a big part of the decision-making process. The wood species is an important consideration because the grain will be a factor in the overall look. Here are some color families that are frequently used for wood floors.

Whites

It is possible to achieve the lightest floor color with stain, pickling or paint. White wood floors provide an expansive, airy feel suited to Scandinavian, minimalist or modern décor.

Grays

Gray flooring has been very trendy in recent years. Its neutral color can support any decorating scheme. Think about whether a cool gray or a warm gray is better suited to the atmosphere you're trying to achieve.

Tans

With the lightest of the brown tones, tan floors can look fresh and natural without the starkness of white. Tan floors are ideal for an open, unfussy look, suitable for farmhouse or contemporary styles.

Red-Oranges

If you want a dramatic look, stains in the red-orange group can pack plenty of punch. Colors that range from teak to rosewood to dark mahogany will be warm, rich and vibrant.

Browns

As the default color of wood, you will find a wide range of brown tones available. If you have a busy household, medium tones will show less dirt. Darker browns will add more visual weight to a room.



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Eco-Friendly Lawn Alternatives

When it comes to landscaping, many people think grass lawns are their only option. However, there are plenty of eco-friendly alternatives to traditional lawns that require less water and are more beneficial for the local environment.



▲ Collecting rainwater is an eco-friendly way to water your lawn.



❶ A meadow lawn is made from a mix of native grasses and wildflowers. Also known as a tapestry lawn, this grass alternative is colorful and uncomplicated. It naturally resists weeds, molds and fungus, and can provide homes for the right kinds of bugs for bats and birds to eat.



❷ Planting a variety of native, pollinator-friendly flowers and plants around your property can attract beneficial bugs such as bees, butterflies and other pollinators that help maintain the biodiversity of your local ecosystem. Additionally, native plants are better adapted to the local climate, so they'll require less water and maintenance than grass.



❸ Other great eco-friendly alternatives to a grass lawn are ground covers such as clover, sedum, thyme or mosses. These plants are low-maintenance and water-saving, plus they provide a beautiful green setting for adjacent shrubs or flowers.

In addition to changing your plantings, consider participating in local initiatives like rainwater harvesting or rewilding projects. Rainwater harvesting involves collecting and storing rainfall to use for watering plants, while rewilding projects are focused on restoring natural landscapes and promoting environmental conservation. These initiatives are a great way to get involved in your community and help create healthier ecosystems.

Visit your local garden center or talk to an expert in sustainable gardening to learn more about alternatives to grass lawns appropriate for your region and microclimate.



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