

# How to Prune

The objective of pruning is to produce strong, healthy, attractive plants.

## Pruning for Health

- This is removing diseased wood, to thin the canopy, or to remove rubbing branches. This encourages a strong structure and reduces the likelihood of storm damage.

## Pruning for Aesthetics

- This is enhancing the natural form of the plant. On young plants, pruning should be done to produce a strong structure, whereas on mature plants, pruning is done to maintain the plant structure, form, health, and appearance.
- When pruning trees the cuts should be done so that only branch wood is removed and the stem is left undamaged. Use a hand saw if a pair of hand pruners will not cut through the branch cleanly.
- When pruning shrubs, cut just above an outward facing bud or shoot. Cut diagonally, parallel with the angle of the bud or shoot.

## When to Prune

- Trees and shrubs may be pruned any time of year but pruning during the dormant season is preferred.
- Be aware that some plants, such as rhododendrons and hydrangeas may flower on old wood, so it is best to selectively prune back these plants.
- There are products on the market for treating the raw wood after pruning a tree. However, it is recommended to not use these products. A healthy plant will heal naturally and any substance added to the cut can trap moisture and disease.

