

# - The Meristem -

Winter  
2021

WHERE WE CULTIVATE GROWTH

NEBRASKA EXTENSION  
MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER



## MG Notes

By Kathleen Cue, Extension Educator

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## Resources for Master Gardeners:

### Websites:

[Mastergardener.unl.edu](http://Mastergardener.unl.edu)

[GroBigRed.com](http://GroBigRed.com)

### Facebook:

Nebraska Master Gardeners

### Send articles for publishing to:

[mspath2@unl.edu](mailto:mspath2@unl.edu)

Next newsletter deadline: April 15

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Region: Burt, Cuming, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge,  
Saunders, Stanton, Thurston, Washington and  
Wayne Counties.

The long-awaited COVID-19 vaccination is here! I am, as are you, looking forward to re-connecting with friends and family, including gardening friends in the Master Gardener program.

Please welcome the 13 new Master Gardener Interns. From Dakota County there is Odessa Cooley; from Burt County, Alana Pearson; from Dodge County, Kathie Skidmore, Mary Jo Spalding and Jen Wulf; from UNPS, Ricardo Ariza, Delberta Frazier, Brenda Hunter Murphy and Ted Hibbler; and from Washington County there are Lori and Chris Amberg, Gina Landsperger, Jayne Stranghoener and Amy Svoboda. We look forward to working with you this coming season!

COVID has changed much of what we do when it comes to education. Thank you to those who have participated in Extension Master Gardener education and the GRO Big Red Gardening Series via zoom. I will provide updates as more opportunities become available. Also, if you'd like to be involved in planning some advanced MG sessions for later this gardening season (actual field trips!), please let me know.

As you plan your Master Gardener volunteer activity this year, or you simply have questions about activities in your county, please let me know and I can provide feedback and support.



# Pruning Shrubs

By Betty Hamata, Master Gardener

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Pruning of shrubs and trees is a task that will help reshape the plant when outside forces like wind, ice, or snow cause damage. Pruning is also done to groom the plant back to a more appealing shape for the space that it holds in your landscape.

I have been thinking a lot about my trees and shrubs since November when we had a terrible ice storm. Every time I look out the windows, I see broken limbs and branches that came down. The locusts, maples and elms around my acreage have the most damage and even my shrubs have many broken limbs.

I would like to focus on the pruning of shrubs in this article. Homeowners have a couple of choices when shrubs outgrow their limited space by using a rejuvenation approach or a renewal approach to pruning. We will look at these two pruning methods.

Many shrubs can tolerate severe pruning in the fall to reduce their height. Some shrubs can be cut back to a few inches above the ground. This is called rejuvenation pruning. The benefit of this type of pruning is the overgrown shrub is immediately brought back into check with no damage to the whole plant. Dogwoods, forsythia, rose of sharon, hydrangea, spirea, and lilac can all tolerate rejuvenation pruning. Some shrubs will not bloom the following year, especially spring blooming shrubs. Evergreen shrubs will not tolerate rejuvenation pruning except yews.

Renewal pruning will also bring shrubs back in line by removing one-third of the shrub each year over a three year period. One third of the oldest branches are cut back to the crown or main stem. The goal is to maintain the overall shape of the shrub while reducing its density and height over time. This process takes longer but is more aesthetically pleasing. Barberry, pyracantha, lilac, forsythia, and weigela are good candidates for renewal pruning. Removing branches from some species will decrease or prevent blooming the following season.

What can we do to prevent shrubs from getting overgrown? Regular thinning and heading cuts help to manage shrub growth, size, and health. A heading cut involves removing the topmost growth of a branch back to a healthy bud or branch. This will encourage growth below the cut, making the plant denser. Thinning cuts are made by cutting off a branch at its point of origin from the parent stem to a lateral side branch, to the "Y" of a branch junction, or to ground level. Avoid shearing off tips of branches with hedge trimmers. A good pruning job is subtle. Before pruning, consider the natural form of the plant and remove branches that do not fit. Always remove suckers and broken branches.

There is some great information from the University of Wisconsin on [How to Trim Deciduous Shrubs](https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/pruning-deciduous-shrubs/). Please go to <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/pruning-deciduous-shrubs/> to read through this guide.



The before and after of pruning.  
Photo credit: University of Wisconsin Horticulture

# Pruning Time - Finding Answers

By Mary Spath, Master Gardener

There are so many questions when it comes to pruning for me that I needed to go looking for answers. I have pulled together a few resources to review and am sharing them with you here.

Kathleen Cue, published a great article on “[When Ice Damages Trees](https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/dodge/DodgeCountyHorticulture/)” you can read this article on the Dodge County Horticulture page found at <https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/dodge/DodgeCountyHorticulture/>.

This article addresses the need to act on the branch breakage that happened during the recent ice storm in 2020. There is the immediate clean up that needed to happen and then, if needed the task to complete the clean up of the damaged branch now since it is pruning time. The best time of the year to prune is late March, April, May or June so now is the time to check out your trees and begin accessing what trees you can take care of and which trees you will need to have a tree service trim for you.

Another great resource is this FAQ document found at <https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/platte/Tree%20Pruning%20FAQs.pdf>

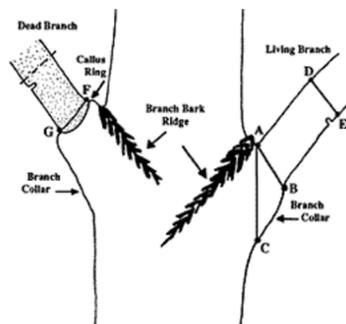


Photo Credit From Publication:  
[Tree Pruning Frequently Asked Questions](#)

This Extension publication addresses some great questions that helped refresh my memory on how to prune, when to prune and what not to do as I prune. When looking for pruning answers you can also go to GroBigRed.com. To navigate to pruning information click on the word Trees from their Home page and you will find articles with great photos that help visualize the content of each article. If you are a Facebook user, you can like the GROBigRed page to get updates as they are posted.

In an article “Pruning Planning for 2021” posted by John Fech, Extension Educator in Douglas County, he states that pruning should be planned and not just done. He says to look at the whole tree or shrub and think through where you want to make the proper cut before you make the cut.

As you make your way outdoors and start working on the pruning jobs ahead of you choosing the right tool will also be important. I found this article from Sarah Browning, Extension Educator in Lancaster County, [Tools for Gardeners](#). A high quality pair of bypass hand pruners and a long handled lopper are essentials to make your work easier. Keeping your tools clean and sharp are very important for the health of the plant and will make the task easier for you.

With the end of winter comes many tasks to do outdoors. Step back do some observing, some planning, some gathering of the right supplies and then enjoy the wonderful outdoors and tasks in front of you.

# Test Your Knowledge - Planting the Landscape

By Kathy Meyer, Master Gardener

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Are you thinking about a new landscape project this year?  
Check out the [Neb Guide - EC1264](#): Planting the Landscape

1. Prep work is the key. Which of the following practices are good integrated pest management strategies for new landscape projects. Choose all that apply.
  - a. good judgment in plant selection
  - b. proper planting practices
  - c. plenty of time and money
  - d. site preparation
2. Site preparation, such as marking utilities and removing unwanted vegetation, begins well before purchasing and planting.  
True or False
3. The addition of compost will benefit nearly all types of soil and improve planting areas. What is a good percentage of compost and soil?
  - a. 25% compost and 75% soil
  - b. 50% compost and 50% soil
  - c. 75% compost and 25% soil
4. Balled and burlapped trees may be purchased in wire baskets. The twine and burlap will deteriorate and do not need to be removed.  
True or False
5. Minor spiraling roots in a container can be corrected at planting by scoring the sides and bottom of the root ball and a girdling root on one side of a tree can be corrected by cutting it.  
True or False
6. Fall is an excellent time to plant woody plants but spring planting is best for which of the following plants?
  - a. spruce trees
  - b. suffrutescent plants
  - c. redbuds trees
  - d. boxwood shrubs
  - e. butterfly bushes
7. To prevent planting too close to the house, a good rule of thumb is to stand next to the edge of the house, take a large step away and mark that location as the outer spread of the plant at maturity, rather than the location of the center of the planting hole.  
True or False



## Answers

1. a, b & d
2. True
3. a
4. False
5. True
6. b, c, d & e
7. True

# Upcoming Trainings

Date	Topic	Link—sent out to your email if not	Instructor
3/15/2021 6:30 p.m.	Advanced MG Education		Growing & Using Herbs - David Lott & Pat Jones - UNL
3/23/2021 6:30 p.m.	Advanced MG Education		Doctoring Your Soil & Mycorrhizae - Elizabeth Wahle - University of Illinois
3/2/2021 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.	All About Trees	<a href="http://go.unl.edu/2021cctrees">go.unl.edu/2021cctrees</a>	Nebraska Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program 2021 CourseConnect
3/9/2021 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.	All About Trees	<a href="http://go.unl.edu/2021cctrees">go.unl.edu/2021cctrees</a>	Nebraska Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program 2021 CourseConnect
3/19/2021 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Master Gardener/ProHort		Introduction to Vegetable Gardening, - John Porter, Nebraska Extension Educator, Douglas-Sarpy County
3/19/2021 10 - 11:30 a.m.	Master Gardener/ProHort		Basic Botany, - Sarah Browning, Nebraska Extension Educator, Lancaster County
3/26/2021 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Master Gardener/ProHort		Welcoming Indigenous Plants, - Mioux Stabler, UmoNhoN Nation Educator
3/26/2021 10 - 11:30 a.m.	Master Gardener/ProHort		Plant Pathology, - Kyle Broderick, UNL Plant & Pest Diagnostic Educator
6/11/2021 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Master Gardener/ProHort		Plant Diagnostic Clinic* - Face to Face if health measures allow