

What plants work best around my mailbox?

Things to consider:

Avoid plants or vines that grow tall around the box and contain thorns or attract bees and insects. These can injure the postal worker.

Make sure plants don't block the view of on-coming traffic.



Plant selection:

Choose plants for your area's light requirements - full sun, shade or partial shade.

Low-growing ornamental grasses and foliage plants are attractive choices.

Consider planting annuals which can be changed out with the seasons.

Include landscaping rock and mulch for a finished look.

January & February Pruning List

Shrubs

Abelia
Arborvitae
Beautyberry
Boxwood
Butterfly Bush
Chaste tree
Cherry Laurel
Clethera, Summersweet
Cotoneaster
Crape Myrtle
Red twig Dogwood
Eleagnus, Thorny
Euonymus
Gardenia
Rose of Sharon
Hydrangea, Summer blooming
Hypericum, St John's Wort

Juniper
Nandina
Osmanthus
Photinia, Red Tip
*Pine, Mugo
Privet
Potentilla
Smoke Tree
Spirea, summer blooming
Sumac
Yew

Evergreen Trees

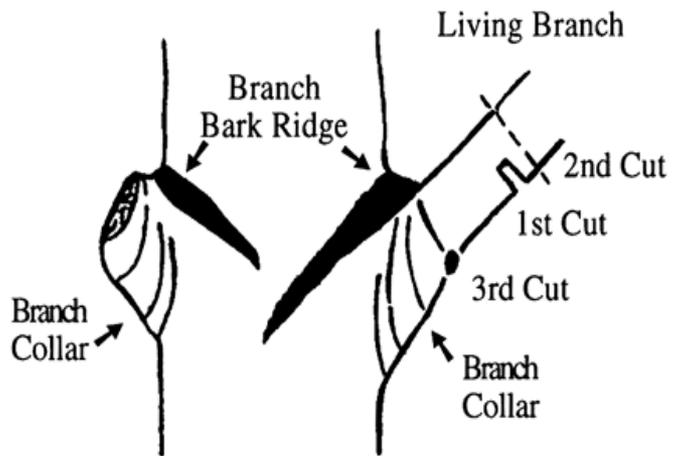
Arborvitae
Atlas Cedar
Deodar Cedar
Fir
Evergreen Holly
Juniper
Leyland Cypress
Southern Magnolia
Live Oak

Deciduous Trees

Alder
*Birch
Crape Myrtle
*Stewartia

Pruning Basics & Tools

What is Pruning? Pruning is plant maintenance involving selective removal of plant parts. This practice wounds the plant, but the plant creates a callous tissue to seal the wound. Virginia Coop. Ext. recommends the pruning cut be made outside the branch collar at a 45 to 60 degree angle to the branch bark ridge. They advise against pruning branches flush to the trunk. Flush cutting damages bark as pruning tools rub against the trunk, removes the branch collar, and goes behind the branch bark ridge. Pruning this way increases the likelihood of extensive decay at the wound area.



Branch bark ridge and branch collar

Why Prune? Pruning can improve the appearance or health of the plant, control the size of the plant, prevent personal injury or property damage, or train young plants. Pruning can also influence fruiting and flowering as well as rejuvenate old trees and shrubs.

Info taken from:

Virginia Tech Publication 430-455 Susan C. French, Extension Technician and Bonnie Lee Appleton, Extension Horticulturist

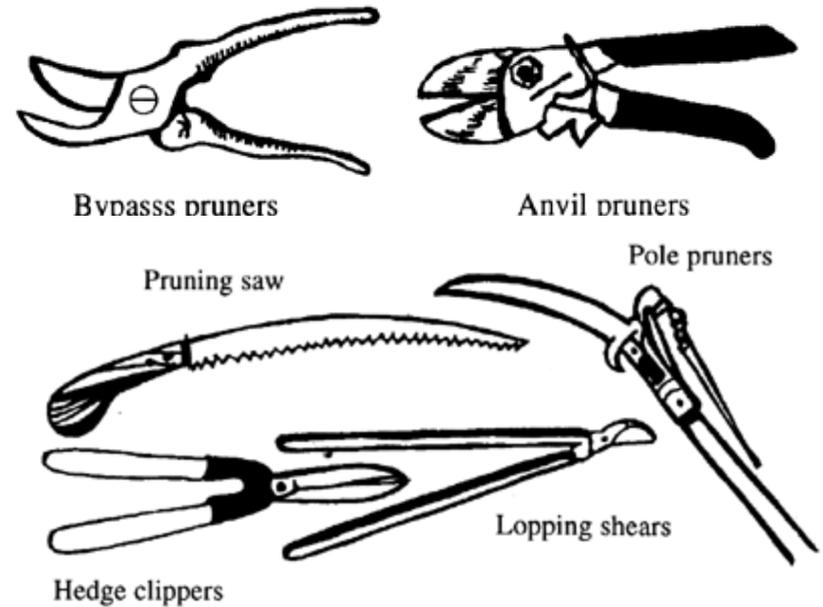
Hand pruners: (Bybass and Anvil) Each cut stems $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter. Bypass pruners are generally recommended because Anvil pruners tend to crush stems as they cut. Also, due to the width of the anvil, anvil pruners can prevent you from reaching in to get a close cut on narrow angled stems.

Lopping Shears: Cut through branches that are up to $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter. These give you extra reach and cutting leverage. Choose those with bypass blades.

Pruning Saw: Use fine-toothed curved saw for branches up to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter; use coarsely toothed saw for branches 3 inches or more in diameter

Pole Pruners: Cut through out of reach branches up to 2 inches in diameter. Most can be extended to reach 12 feet or more in height. Great for locations where ladders would damage the tree.

Hedge Clippers: Trim thin stemmed hedges. These will shear off growth in a straight line. The drawback to this type of shearing is that over time, the hedges develop an abundance of outer twigs and die back in the center. This often results in an increase of pest problems to the plant.



Make your pruning tools last:

- * Select quality tools.
 - * Sharpen blades regularly.
 - * Dry and oil blades after each use.
 - ** Disinfect your tools between plants or between cuts on same plant that is diseased to prevent cross contamination. Use *Lysol*, *Listerine* or rubbing alcohol (70%, 91% or 99 % concentration) undiluted.
- DO NOT USE *Pine Sol* or household bleach!** These are highly corrosive to metal.



Native Plant of the Month

Eastern Red Bud

The Eastern Red Bud is a large shrub or small tree that grows up to 30 feet with a short, often twisted trunk and spreading branches.

The blossom is a spectacular flower, pink to light purple in color, ½ inch long appearing in clusters along older stems in early spring before the leaves appear.

Planting tips:

Planting site should receive full sun to partial shade, with the shade in the afternoon.

Site should drain well with no standing water.

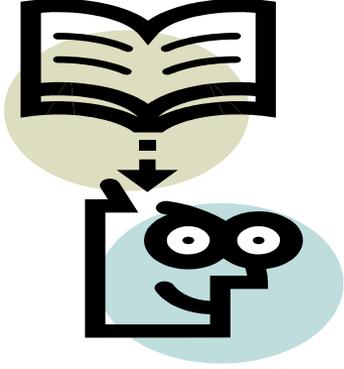
Spread 3 to 4 inches of mulch over the planting site. Pull the mulch about 4 inches away from the base of the trunk to prevent rot.

Adding a mulch ring also protects the thin-barked Red Bud from mower or string trimmer injury when grown in lawns.

Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation



Photo © Kerry Wilken



A Gardener's Vocabulary...

What's that mean???

Annual: Usually bright blooming or attractive foliage plants that live through one growing season. They may reseed or hibernate over a mild winter with some mulching. Periwinkles, pansies, impatiens and flowering cabbages are all annuals.

Biennial: These are flowering or fruiting plants that have a 2 year life cycle. The first year is spent growing leaves, stems and roots. Then a cold season is usually needed for it to flower or fruit during the next spring or summer. Onions, parsley, Sweet William and carrots are biennials.

Perennial: These are garden troopers – plants that thrive in our growing 'zone'. They are suitable for our climate and continue to provide us with year after year of blooms or foliage from rootstock. Helleborus, daylilies, hosta, liriope, primrose, arum, cardinal flower, may apple, jack-in-the-pulpit and sedum to name a few.