Pruning—Now Is the Time!!!

The late dormant season is best for most pruning. Pruning in late winter, just before spring growth starts, leaves fresh wounds exposed for only a short length of time before new growth begins the wound sealing process. Another advantage of dormant pruning is that it's easier to make pruning decisions without leaves obscuring plant branch structure.

Pruning at the proper time can avoid certain disease and physiological problems:

- To avoid oak wilt disease DO NOT prune oaks from April to October. If oaks are wounded or must be pruned during these months, apply wound dressing or latex paint to mask the odor of freshly cut wood so the beetles that spread oak wilt will not be attracted to the trees.
- To avoid increased likelihood of stem cankers, prune honeylocusts when they are still dormant in late winter. If they must be pruned in summer, avoid rainy or humid weather conditions.
- Prune apple trees, including flowering crabapples, mountain ash, hawthorns and shrub cotoneasters in late winter (February-early April). Spring or summer pruning increases chances for infection and spread of the bacterial disease fireblight. Autumn or early winter pruning is more likely to result in drying and die-back at pruning sites.
- Some trees have free-flowing sap that "bleeds" after late winter or early spring pruning. Though this bleeding causes little harm, it may still be a source of concern. To prevent bleeding, you could prune the following trees after their leaves are fully expanded in late spring or early summer. Never remove more than 1/4 of the live foliage. Examples include all maples (including box elder), butternut and walnut, birch and its relatives (e.g., ironwood and blue beech).
- Shrubs that bloom on new growth may be pruned in spring before growth begins. Plants with marginally hardy stems such as clematis and shrub roses should be pruned back to live wood. Hardier shrubs such as late blooming spireas and smooth (snowball) hydrangeas should be pruned to the first pair of buds above the ground.

Proper Pruning Principles

Trees and shrubs that bloom early in the growing season on last year's growth should be pruned immediately after they finish blooming:
- apricot, azalea, chokeberry, choke-cherry, clove currant, flowering plum or cherry, forsythia, Juneberry, lilac, magnolia, and early blooming spirea.
**Mark Your Calendar...**

_**February 21**—Winter Gardening Fair, Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Program Information: Linn County Extension Office (319) 377-9839._

_**February 24-26**—Shade Tree Short Course and Iowa Nursery & Landscape Assoc. Conference and Trade Show, Scheman Building, Iowa State Center, Ames, Iowa. Program Information: Jeff Iles (515) 294-3718._

_**February 28**—Warren County Master Gardeners and Indianola Parks & Recreation’s *Think Spring!* 9-3, Hubbell Hall, Ken Campus Center, Simpson College, Indianola. Speakers include James Baggett, magazine editor/writer; “Grow Wild: Perennials, Annuals Shrubs for Wildlife” · Inger Lamb, Prairie Landscapes of Iowa LLC; “Creating Functional & Attractive Rain Gardens” · Marcia Leeper, avid gardener and retired writer for *August Home Publications*; “How Your Garden Grows” · Jennifer Smith, Butcher Crick Farms, LLC; “Growing, Enjoying & Preserving Heirloom Vegetables.” $45 (includes lunch). Master Gardeners earn 4 CU credits. Call 515-961-9420 for more information._

_**April 11**—Knoxville Federated Garden Club’s *Garden Gala*, 8:30-3:30, Dyer Hudson, Marion County Fairgrounds, Knoxville. Speakers include Marcia Leeper, avid gardener and retired writer for *August Home Publications*; “Creating Balance In Your Garden” · Joe McNally, Horticulture Project Manager for the Iowa Arboretum; “Techniques for Growing Woody Ornamentals” · Lisa Orgler, Iowa State University Lecturer and Reiman Gardens’ Assistant Director; “How to Create An Out-of-the Ordinary Theme Garden.” Those who attended last year will receive registration material in late February. Others interested in attending should contact Mary Dee Dykstra (tmddykstra@iowatelecom.net) or Joyce Smith (jjsmith2@msn.com). $40 (includes lunch). Master Gardeners earn 3 CU credits._

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**Morel Workshop**

Interested in hunting and selling morel mushrooms in Iowa? If so, plan to take this three-hour class in April from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and be certified to sell morel mushrooms legally within the state of Iowa. All three 2015 morel certification workshops will be held on the Iowa State University campus in Ames, at Room 106, in the Seed Science Building, located at the northwest corner of Wallace Road and Osborn Drive, on the following dates:

- Saturday, April 4, 1-4 p.m.
- Saturday, April 11, 1-4 p.m.
- Saturday, April 18, 1-4 p.m.

Free parking is available near the Seed Science Building, in Lot #41 on the east side of Wallace Road. See an online campus map.

To register for the workshop by Monday, March 30, contact Mark Gleason at 515-294-0579 or email mgleason@iastate.edu. Participants should indicate which workshop they plan to attend. Cost is $50 per person, payable at the training. Cash or checks are accepted; no credit cards.

“The Green Scene” is a tip sheet developed by the Marion County Extension Office to inform people of horticulture events, problems, and interesting ideas. Let us know if you want to be added to our mailing list. Recent issues are also available at [www.extension.iastate.edu/marion/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/marion/).

This material has been prepared by Karen Ackley, Agriculture Program Assistant.

If you have questions, please contact the office at (641) 842-2014. Sincerely, **Dale R. Miller**, County Extension Program Director