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Selective Pruning The Natural Look!

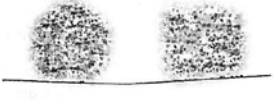



As summer begins and the plants have begun to grow it is time to turn to occasional maintenance practices which will help to control unwanted plant growth. If you followed the "Rejuvenation" process earlier in the year as necessary by plant species you should have plants which are growing out naturally and now, depending on your situation may require some "Selective Pruning". Selective Pruning is a method of only pruning the unwanted growth from the plant. This would include awkward growth, crossing branches and deadwood. The goal is to keep the natural look of the shrub and help promote flowering. Continuous shearing or hedging will remove the new growth and cause undue stress to the plant. This will also remove any flowering that may currently be in place or remove potential blooms that are forming. A large majority of our plants provide some sort of flowering which greatly enhances the beauty of the landscape.



We also refer to the fact that continuous shearing of plants will cause them to become woody in appearance and provide stress that can greatly shorten the life expectancy. Remember that the leaves of any plant provide the food necessary to keep the plant healthy and vigorous. If this factory is continuously removed while it is active then the plant will stress.

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Figure 3: Shrub Pruning	
 DON'T	Costly overpruning once a month can inhibit flowering, promote woody growth and require excessive watering.
 DO	Pruning of shrubs to maintain a full, natural shape and flowering cycle is preferred.
 DON'T	Square and cut off edges of groundcovers is unattractive, unnatural and potentially harmful. When each individual groundcover is pruned separately it becomes wasteful and costly. Square pruning at the edges of sidewalks and curbs forces the need for frequent trimming to maintain a clean, clipped edge.
 DO	Trimming at an angle along the edge allows plants to grow together and is more aesthetically pleasing. Topping trimming and angle trimming is only needed occasionally.

Care should be taken when performing pruning making sure that the tools are sharp and clean. For homeowners, using loppers and/or hand pruners are recommended depending on the size of branches to be cut. If you have plants which are growing over walkways or causing visibility issues then you may want to consider removing them and replacing with a smaller species.



The Correct Method to Palm Tree Trimming

Fran Morahan III, Certified Arborist WE-5842A



We prune palms for the same reasons we prune other trees. That is, mostly for the needs of people, rather than for the needs of the tree. That does not mean there is anything wrong with pruning, but it is important to keep in mind that pruning is a stress to the tree, and it should be conducted with specific objectives in mind.

The hurricane cut removes all the fronds, alive and dead, up to and above a 45-degree angle which is not typically the correct method. The loss of live foliage, whether on a palm or a pine, can have dire consequences and should not be undertaken without a clear understanding of the potential risks and benefits. Removing live foliage can starve a tree, reducing its photosynthetic capacity to support critical functions such as growth, storage, and defense. Excessive pruning can become a contributing factor in the decline and eventual death of any tree. Removing too much live foliage during a season can significantly reduce trunk expansion during that same time period. Hurricane cuts can remove so much foliage that the trunk becomes constricted and a potential weak point.



Trees that have been severely pruned for a time and then left to grow have an hourglass figure; this constriction can snap off in high winds.

Appearance trimming should never exceed a 180 degree angle; to reduce habitat for unwanted insects, rodents, and birds (and even snakes!); and for safety. The dead leaves can become a safety hazard when they fall great distances. The Canary Island date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) has large, heavy petioles armed with long, sharp, modified leaves, or spikes that can cause serious injury if they strike a person when the leaf falls.



Welcome Back!

We would like to welcome back to Four Peaks Fran Morahan III. Fran has rejoined our team as Four Peaks Certified Arborist. Fran's knowledge and experience with our landscapes in the Phoenix Area will provide a great benefit as a member of our team and as our Certified Arborist.

Water Management 101

By Jim Trog, CIA, CIC



June typically brings extremely hot temperatures with no chance of rains. Based on these factors irrigation should be closely monitored and adjusted according to soil moisture. How much should I irrigate you ask? Well based on history we can take a close guess as to what we should be applying going into the month and make adjustments as necessary to account for actual weather. We typically use a factor call Evapotranspiration to gauge how much water to apply and depending on the type plants (this affects the crop coefficient) and irrigation (sprinklers, drip, bubblers, etc.) an estimated run time can be established to provide adequate water. June historically has the highest amount of Evapotranspiration of any month therefore making it

the highest irrigation water use month of the year. There are a couple of websites which can be utilized to gather current and historic data to estimate irrigation requirements. AZMET (Arizona Meteorological Network) which can be found at [www. ag.arizona.edu/AZMET](http://www.ag.arizona.edu/AZMET) has turf watering guide for the phoenix area along with information from several weather stations throughout the state. Arizona Municipal Water Users Association has a table outlining seasonal watering requirements and an interactive scheduling tool which is extremely helpful. This can be located on the web at:

www.amwua.org

The best water management practice of all is to know your landscape and pay attention to appearance, growth and even signs of stress in the plants. Taking some time to make sure that you are not overwatering will not only help conserve water but will save money.



MONTHLY LANDSCAPE CHECKLIST

Plant Renovation List (Common Type Plants)

- √ Desert Bird of Paradise
- √ Bottlebrush
- √ Bat-Faced Cuphea
- √ Brittlebush
- √ Creosote
- √ Oleander
- √ Penstemon

– General Irrigation Setting (Actual times will vary depending on the precipitation rate of your system)

- √ Bermuda Grass Turf irrigated using typical pop-up sprinklers: 12 – 15 minutes three times per week.
- √ Drip irrigation for Plants: 20 – 30 minutes two times per week. These times are for

ornamental type plants. Native or xeriscape plants will require less.

- √ Drip irrigation for Trees: 40 – 50 minutes one time per week. These times are for ornamental type trees. Native or xeriscape trees will require less.

Please remember that these are general recommendations and depending on your system you may need to adjust watering times up or down. Also, if we do receive rain then irrigation can be suspended until the soil dries.

Turf Fertilization for the Bermuda Grass should be completed once every six to eight weeks on average using fertilizer containing at least 16–21% Nitrogen. Apply following the label and make sure to water in for a few minutes after application.