

Press Release.

Jack Frost No Deterrent to Tree Pruning

Winter may not be prime time to dabble in the garden. But it is a good time to prune your trees – especially those that flower in the summer. Not only are trees dormant in the winter, but it also is easiest to see a tree's structure when no leaves are on the branches.

"Proper pruning is vital to the health of trees and plants, in part because it helps relieve stress on trees and keeps them growing," said Ian McDermott, executive director of the United Kingdom & Ireland Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). "Just be aware that each tree is different, and pruning at the wrong time or the wrong way can injure a tree or make it susceptible to disease."

Pruning helps keep surrounding areas safe for people and objects by removing frail branches. But too much pruning can create more problems than it solves, McDermott added, advising homeowners prune annually and lightly instead of all at once. When in doubt, consult a local ISA certified arborist for advice.

What to prune

Deciding what and where to prune involves an understanding of basic tree biology, sharp tools, and an artful eye. Where you make the cut is as important as knowing what to remove. There are a few simple principles to understand before you prune:

- Always have a purpose in mind before you cut. Removing dead or diseased wood, providing clearance, or improving shape or structure, are most common.
- Proper technique is essential. Poor pruning technique can cause long term damage. Learn how to make proper cuts.
- Small cuts do less damage to the tree than large cuts. Unlike people, tree wounds don't heal, they close. Smaller cuts close quicker.

Other helpful tips

- Make cuts just outside the branch collar for quick wound closure.
- Avoid leaving stubs.
- Keep tools sharp and clean.
- Visit www.isa-uki.org for information on proper pruning.

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) is a nonprofit organisation supporting tree care research around the world. Headquartered in Champaign, Ill., ISA is dedicated to the care and preservation of the shade and ornamental tress. For more information contact the Chapter, a local ISA certified arborist or visit www.isa-uki.org.