THE PLEASURES & PERILS OF PRUNING PERENNIALS

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Welcome!

The mission of Zilker Botanical Garden is to promote and provide for the educational, cultural, and aesthetic enrichment of the community through signature gardens and exhibits.
We are 100% Organic!
Rainwater & Compost Displays

**Nutrients:**
Compost contains a full spectrum of nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, as well as micronutrients, such as iron and manganese. Because compost is slow release, it continues to enrich the soil long after it has been applied, unlike most fertilizers which are quick release.

**Soil Structure:**
Compost loosens clay soil, allowing roots to develop water to drain and air to penetrate. Sandy soils retain water.

**Water Quality:**
Compost increases the soil’s ability to retain water and decreases runoff. Runoff carries fertilizers and pesticides to nearby creeks and streams and may pollute them.

**Beneficial Soil Life:**
Compost introduces and feeds beneficial organisms in the soil. It suppresses diseases and harmful pests that overly rely on conventional fertilizers.
To Prune or Not to Prune
Camellia of Ten Thousand Flowers
Jade Peak Yufeng Temple
Perennials

• Comes from the Latin term meaning “enduring”
• Refers to all plants persisting for two or more years
• Could be woody, semi-woody or herbaceous
• Can be short or long-lived
• Refers to trees as well as herbaceous perennials
Native Annual Wildflowers
Stem Cross Sections

- Phloem tissues distribute sugars
- Xylem tissues distribute water and minerals from the roots
- Cross-section of herbaceous compared to woody dicot
Tissue Type: Herbaceous
Nodes & Internodes

- terminal bud
- bud scales
- lateral bud
- lenticels
- leaf scar
- ring of bud scale scars from previous year’s terminal bud
- internode
- node
- bundle trace in leaf scar
- pith
When to Prune

• Cut back herbaceous and semi-woody perennials before they start new growth in Spring

• Early Spring (late February) generally best: Roses, Buddelia, Abelia, Salvias, Althea, Crape Myrtles, Lantana

• Prune Spring flowering shrubs after bloom: Quince, Climbing Roses, Spirea, Viburnum, Azaleas

• Avoid pruning Live Oaks February-June
Reasons for pruning

- Train the plant
- Maintain plant health
- Improve quality of flowers, fruit, foliage or stems
- Restrict or redirect growth
- Repair storm, insect and disease damage
- Improve visibility for entryways or street intersections

- Never top a tree!
Pruning Basics

- Keep tools clean and sharp
- Sterilize tools between trees, shrubs or after cutting diseased wood
- Make clean, directional cuts
- Prune for a good reason!
Proper Pruning Angles
TAMU Earthkind Landscaping Doug Welsh

Figure 5. Pruning back to an intersecting lateral branch
Stop the Madness!!!
Stop Crape Murder!
Photos by Greg Grant
Sage Slaughter
Bunchgrass Butchering
(Not) Pruning for Wildlife
Semi-Woody Perennial: Lantana
Evergreen Perennial: Blackfoot Daisy
Evergreen Perennial: Crossvine
Evergreen Perennial: Pink Skullcap
Evergreen Perennial: Rock Penstemon
Evergreen Perennial: Zexmenia
Herbaceous Perennial: Mexican Bush Sage
“No one can do everything, but everyone can do something”
- Helen Keller
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