



# Home Gardening Newsletter

July-August  
2017



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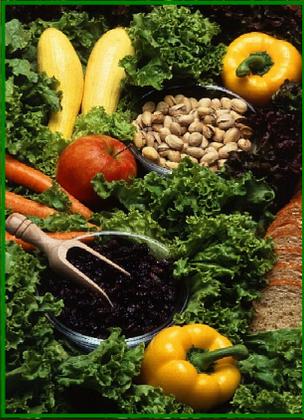
## BOLO Late Blight on Tomatoes

Late Blight on Tomatoes has been confirmed in Henderson County this past June 26th. Tomato and potato are extremely susceptible to this disease and can be significantly defoliated within days if environmental conditions are conducive. Heavy morning dews and cool, wet weather favor this disease. Active scouting and preventive fungicide applications to protect tomato crops in NC from late blight is recommended.

The first symptoms of late blight on tomato leaves are irregularly shaped, water-soaked lesions, often with a lighter halo or ring around them; these lesions are typically found on the younger, more succulent leaves in the top portion of the plant canopy. During high humidity, white cottony growth may be visible on underside of the leaf. Spots are visible on both sides of the leaves. As the disease progresses, lesions enlarge causing leaves to brown, shrivel and die. Late blight can also attack tomato fruit in all stages of development. Rotted fruit are typically firm with greasy spots that eventually become leathery and chocolate brown in color; these spots can enlarge to the point of encompassing the entire fruit. See pictures below.

### General Disease Management

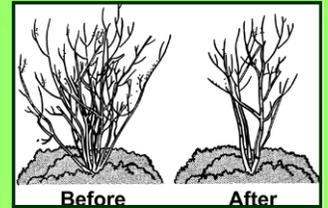
- Plant early in the season to escape high disease pressure
- Do not allow water to remain on leaves for long periods of time
- Scout plants often and remove infected plants, infected fruit, volunteers and weeds
- Clean tools and equipment after leaving your garden
- Plant resistant varieties when possible. New varieties resistant to some strains of *P. infestans* have recently been developed. A plum tomato variety named 'Plum Regal', as well as a new campari-type called 'Mountain Magic' and the large-fruited variety 'Mountain Merit' have resistance to some strains of late blight, as well as the variety 'Defiant' from Johnny's seed company.
- Protect the crop with fungicides for more info go to page 4.



# Pruning Trees & Shrubs - A Few Tips

Pruning is one of the most important cultural practices for maintaining woody ornamental trees and shrubs. Knowing why, when, and how to prune correctly will make the difference between a healthy, aesthetically pleasing plant and one that is unhealthy, misshapen or both.

The time to prune varies with plant species. Spring-flowering shrubs are typically pruned after bloom to avoid flower removal from the previous year's growth. Summer-flowering shrubs are generally pruned during the dormant winter season. For non-flowering shrubs, the best time to prune in most cases, is before growth begins in the spring.



There are numerous reasons for pruning. Sometimes, you may desire to train or direct the growth of plants into a particular form or within a specified space, like a formal hedge. Or you may want to prune mature plants to control or limit their size and shape, as in the case of fruit trees. For fruiting plants, pruning plays an important role in improving overall fruit quality, primarily by increasing light penetration into the tree. The best time to prune for fruit trees and berries is springtime before the buds begin to flower.

Unfortunately, many people approach pruning with a great deal of apprehension. Others view pruning as a chore and give little consideration to technique as they hastily get the job done. Proper pruning requires a basic understanding of how plants respond to various pruning cuts.

When pruning, first remove any dead, diseased, or damaged wood. Then carefully select and remove branches while maintaining the natural shape of the plant. There are five basic techniques for pruning shrubs:

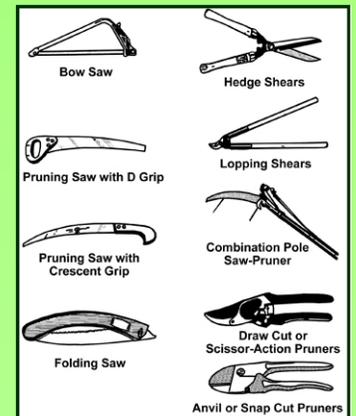
1) Pinching - removing the tip of a succulent, green shoot before it becomes woody and firm. This is done to reduce length and encourage branching.

2) Heading back - cutting a branch back to a healthy bud or branch to stimulate growth and increase bushiness.

3) Thinning - removing a branch at its point of origin (ground, parent stem, trunk, side branch, etc.) to create a more open plant without stimulating new growth.

4) Renewal pruning (rejuvenation) - removing the oldest branches by pruning them near the ground, leaving the younger, more vigorous branches (which may also be pruned). Examples include: Abelia, deutzia, forsythia, spirea, and weigela are pruned using this method.

5) Shearing - removing the tips of most branches with shearing or hedge clippers. Shearing should be used sparingly as it destroys the natural shape of the plant and inhibits light penetration, eventually causing dieback in the interior of the shrub.



Proper pruning can lengthen a shrub or tree's life, increase its value, and minimize liability problems. Incorrect pruning can cause pest and decay problems, increased liability and greatly reduce the tree's life span. Topping is an example of improper pruning and is one of the worst things you can do to your tree. Topping is the indiscriminate cutting back of tree branches to stubs. Most people top their trees to reduce its size. Topping stresses trees, causes decay, creates hazards, and ruins the natural beauty of the tree. Trees that have been topped are more prone to storm damage as well as insect and disease problems.

Finally, remember that some plants bleed heavily after pruning. Bleeding is unsightly but usually harmless. Trees subject to bleeding should be pruned in the late spring or early summer when leaves are on the tree. Actively growing leaves tend to reduce the amount of bleeding from pruning cuts and allow the cuts to heal more quickly. Plants that bleed readily include willows, birches, maples, beeches and dogwoods.

# July-August Horticulture Tips



## Lawns

- Mow fescue and bluegrass lawns 3 inches high.
- Be sure newly spring seeded lawns get 1 inch of water per week.
- Check for white grubs under turf in late August. Treat with insecticide if needed.
- Submit soil samples for fall fertilizer recommendations.
- Do not seed or fertilize fescue or bluegrass before the last week in August.

## Vegetables

- Check vegetable garden daily for signs of diseases and insects.
- Harvest vegetables while young and tender, picking early in the day for best quality. Wait until leaves are dry before picking beans to avoid spreading disease.
- Sow seeds for fall vegetable garden: beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, bush beans, carrots, collards, kale, parsnips, squash, cucumbers and turnips.
- Check sweet corn for corn earworms as silks emerge.
- Harvest garlic when the bottom 2-3 leaves have at least half yellowed.
- Dig potatoes when tops begin to die down.
- Provide one inch of water per week around vegetables. Watering deeply is better for root development than frequent shallow watering.
- Side dress continuing crops. Work material into the soil surface 4-6 inches from the plants.



## Fruits

- Pick blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, peaches.
- Prune the fruiting canes of raspberry and blackberry plants after harvest is over.
- Remove suckers and water sprouts from fruit trees.
- Continue fungicide/insecticide sprays on fruit trees and grape vines. Be sure to follow label directions for pre-harvest interval.

## Trees Shrubs & Flowers

- Fertilize and prune shrubs for the last time this season. **DO NOT** prune spring-flowering shrubs now because buds are starting to form.
- Be careful with string trimmers and mowers around trees and shrubs. Young trees can easily be killed when bark is damaged.
- Watch for crape myrtle aphids, bagworms, azalea lacebugs, Japanese beetles, spider mites. Spray only if needed.
- Stop pinching back chrysanthemums after July 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Continue spraying rose bushes for disease control and feed for the last time by mid August.
- Remove spent blooms from flower beds to encourage continued bloom.
- Cut back and feed annuals to produce new growth and fall blooms.
- Remove spent blossoms from purple coneflowers, daisies, Black-eyed Susans, and butterfly bush for blooms until frost.
- Divide daylilies if crowded. Cut back to 6-8" above ground.
- Perennials to start from seed include: poppy, lupine, cardinal flower and Shasta daisy.



## Late Blight Continued from pg. 2

Home Gardeners should use products containing the active ingredients copper or chlorothalonil (the trade name of one product with chlorothalonil is known as 'Daconil') are the best and only effective products available to home gardeners. In addition, home gardeners should grow varieties with resistance if they are worried about late blight in future years because most chemicals available to the home gardener are not sufficient to control late blight once it appears. Once plants are infected in a home garden, there is little that can be done to protect them besides weekly fungicide sprays.

Information was provided by Inga Meadows, NCSU Plant Pathologist. For more information go to <https://plantpathology.ces.ncsu.edu/2017/06/late-blight-on-tomato-confirmed-in-henderson-county-nc-june-26-2017>

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Sincerely,

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**NC** COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION

N.C. A&T

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