



HAND PRUNING VS. SHEARING

It is sometimes confusing, but there is a big difference between hand pruning and shearing. Shearing is clipping all the growing tips off a shrub with hand or electric shears, which usually results in a globe or formal box cut. Shearing is appropriate for hedges, topiary, and some evergreen shrubs in a formal garden, as well as for hedges where flat sides and tops are desired. For other plants, it destroys the natural shape of the shrub and can diminish flowering, due to the fact that most all flowering plant material used in our landscapes are referred to as "terminal bloomers." This means that the stems won't bloom at the tips. When shearing is practiced, the blooms are removed, resulting in little to no flower display. When a shrub is hand pruned, some of the larger older branches are removed to correct its shape and size while leaving smaller branches to take their place. When pruned this way, a shrub will stay loose and natural looking and you often can't even tell that it has been pruned, except for a more appealing shape or a reduction in size. Hand pruning will also keep the shrub thin enough to allow sunlight to penetrate to the inside, which will help maintain inner foliage in order to continue the process of removing the larger branches to control the shape and size.

Reasons for Pruning:

- To train the plant
- To maintain plant health
- To improve the quality of flowers, fruit, foliage or stems
- To restrict growth

Proper pruning enhances the beauty of almost any landscape, while improper pruning can ruin or greatly reduce its landscape potential. In most cases, it is better not to prune than to do it incorrectly. By using improper pruning methods, healthy plants are often weakened, deformed and their life span is greatly reduced.

IN CONCLUSION:

The necessity for pruning can be reduced or eliminated by selecting the proper plant for the location. Plants that might grow too large for the site, are not entirely hardy, or become unsightly with age, should be used wisely and kept to a minimum in the landscape plan. Remember that pruning is the removal or reduction of certain plant parts that are not required, that are no longer effective, or that are of no use to the plant. It is done to supply additional energy and improve the health; for the development of flowers, fruits, and limbs that remain on the plant.

Sheared Podocarpus:



ADVANTAGE OF SHEARING:

Shearing is to create a formal hedge like appearance.

- Quick and easy
- Creates formal or specific shapes
- Plant Examples: Ficus, Eugenia, Jasmine, Ilex and Podocarpus

Hand Pruned Ixora:



ADVANTAGE TO HAND PRUNING:

Hand pruning is the most natural looking form of pruning there is.

- Ability to remove dead material. Sometimes this is all that is required to improve the appearance of the plant.
- Ability to rejuvenate older hedges. This involves a two to three year process to promote, ultimately, a thicker, healthier hedge. First year removing 1/3 of the branches near ground level. Second year removing half of the remaining old stems near ground level. Third year cut back the last of the remaining old stems and tip back new growth as needed.
- Plant examples: Ixora, Seagrape, Viburnum, Ligustrum and Wax Myrtle

